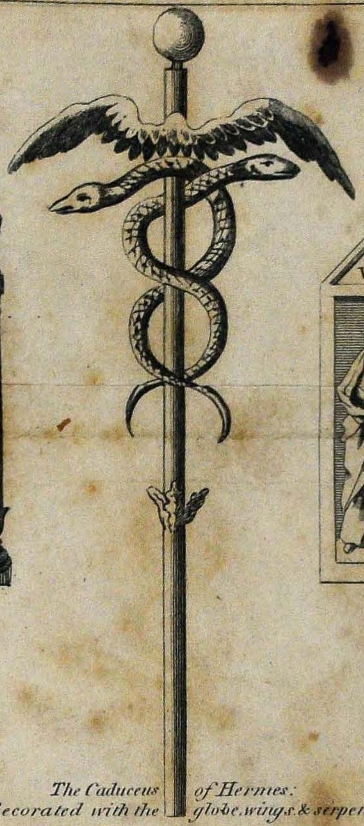
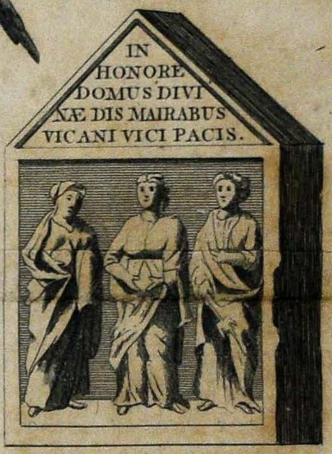
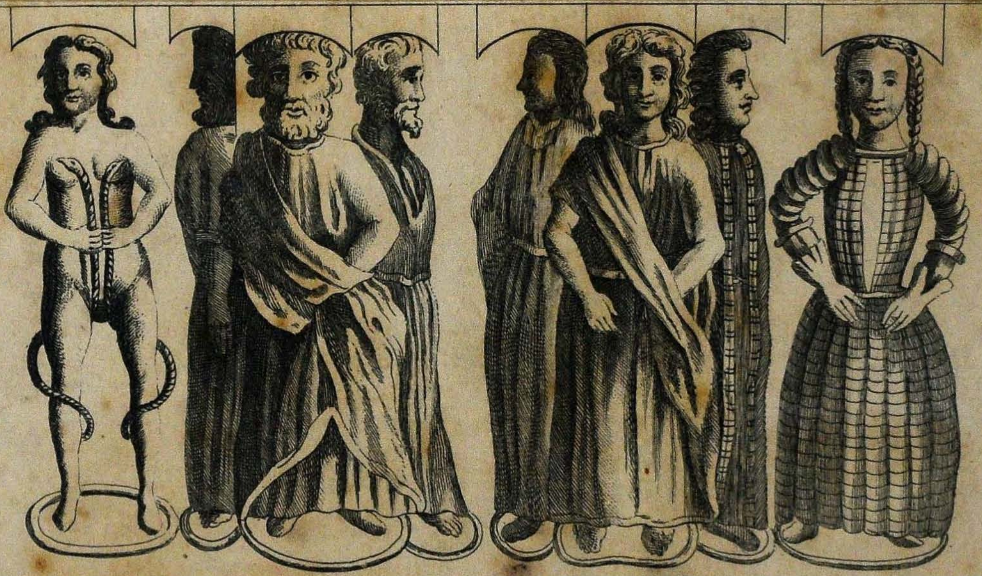
Trigla:
the German Diana.



The Caduceus of Hermes:
decorated with the globe, wings, & serpents.



Mairiæ
German Triad.



Gaulic Deities in Triple Groups copied from the Portal of an ancient temple at Montmorillon in France.

INDIAN ANTIQUITIES:

OR,

1583

DISSERTATIONS,

RELATIVE TO

THE ANCIENT GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS,
THE PURE SYSTEM OF PRIMEVAL THEOLOGY,
THE GRAND CODE OF CIVIL LAWS,
THE ORIGINAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT,
THE WIDELY-EXTENDED COMMERCE, AND
THE VARIOUS AND PROFOUND LITERATURE,

OF HINDOSTAN:

COMPARED, THROUGHOUT, WITH THE
RELIGION, LAWS, GOVERNMENT, and LITERATURE,

OF

PERSIA, EGYPT, AND GREECE.

THE WHOLE
Intended as Introductory to, and Illustrative of,

THE HISTORY OF HINDOSTAN,

UPON A COMPREHENSIVE SCALE.

VOL. V.

In which the Investigation of the ORIENTAL TRIADS of DEITY is continued; and the HORRIBLE PENANCES of the INDIAN DEVOTEES are detailed.

LONDON:
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M.DCC.XCIV.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ORIENTAL TRIADS OF DEITY CONTINUED.

CHAPTER VI.

The Author, persevering in his Research throughout Asia for the Remains of the primitive Doctrine of a divine Triad governing the World, discovers evident Vestiges of it in THIBET *and* TARTARY *engraved on Medals and sculptured in Images.* — *An Account of the celebrated* MEDAL *found in the Deserts of* SIBERIA *impressed with the Figure of a tri-une Deity.* — *The Scandinavian Theology plainly inculcates the Doctrine in its Three sacred Persons,* ODEN, FREA, *and* THOR. — *Extracts from the* EDDA *decidedly confirming the above Assertion.* — *From the northern Asia this Doctrine, with other Oriental Dogmas, was propagated to America, demonstrated from Acosta in their great Idol* TANGATANGA *or* THREE IN ONE. — *Brief Statement of the theological Code of* CHINA. — *Evidence adduced from Le*

 Compte

Compte that the Chinese are not without the Notion of a DIVINE TRIAD *governing the World.*

FROM the previous extenſive ſurvey of the various ſyſtems of EASTERN THEOLOGY, it is evident that the notion of a Divine Triad governing the univerſe, however darkened and degraded through the prevalence of a long ſeries of groſs ſuperſtitions, was a doctrine that immemorially prevailed in the ſchools of Aſia. From whatever diſtant ſource derived, through ſucceſſive generations, and amidſt a thouſand perverſions, the GREAT TRUTH contended for beams forth with more or leſs ſplendor in every country of the ancient world, and darts conviction upon the mind not prejudiced againſt the reception of it by the ſuggeſtions of human pride and the dogmas of falſe philoſophy.

To try the merits of this great cauſe in the court of human reaſon, is evidently to bring it before a tribunal incompetent to decide upon ſo important a queſtion; and is, in fact, to exalt a terreſtial judge before the eternal Judge of all things. Since, however, the ancient Jews did not think it repugnant to reaſon to diſtinguiſh the divine Eſſence into THREE LIGHTS,

LIGHTS, affigning them names very nearly refembling thofe by which we denominate the three hypoftafes of the Chriftian Trinity, and fince they affirm that *number in God does not deftroy his unity*; fince, alfo, the fyftem of *emanations*, iffuing from, and returning into, the abyfs of the Divinity, was fo generally admitted into the theology of thofe pagan nations, whofe fole guide in forming that theology is averred to have been the light of reafon; we are juftified in afferting that this doctrine, though not founded upon reafon as a bafis, is by no means deftitute of its decided fupport and concurrence. The bafis upon which it refts is far more noble as well as durable, DIVINE REVELATION, ftrengthened by the moft ancient traditions, and the confenting creed of nearly all the kingdoms of the Greater Afia. This fact, already in part eftablifhed, will be ftill more fully evinced, as we continue the progrefs of our inveftigation through that extenfive quarter of the globe.

From India, if we direct our eyes northward to the great empires of Tangut and Thibet, and over the vaft Tartarian deferts to Siberia itfelf, we fhall find the fame fentiments predominate. In the former country, if the authors quoted in Parfons's Remains of Japhet

may be credited, medals, having the figure of the TRI-UNE DEITY ſtamped upon them, are given to the people by the Dalai-Lama, who unites in his own perſon the hierarchal and regal character, to be ſuſpended as a holy object around their necks, or conſpicuouſly elevated in the chapels where they perform their devotions.* It is there alſo aſſerted that the Roman miſſionaries, arriving in thoſe regions, found the people already in poſſeſſion of that fundamental doctrine of the true religion, which, among others, they came to impreſs upon their minds, and univerſally adoring an idol fabricated to reſemble, as nearly as poſſible, a Trinity in Unity. Dr. Parſons is of opinion, that, as there is no record of their having had the principles of the Chriſtian religion ever propagated among them, they could only have attained to the knowledge of that myſterious truth by means of traditional dogmas, handed down to them from very high antiquity, which, in the courſe of ſo many revolving ages and ſuch numerous viciſſitudes as Aſia has undergone, has never been obliterated from their minds, although it has been degraded by being blended with the ſuperſtitions of the neighbouring

Brahmins

* See Parſons's Remains of Japhet, p. 185 and 206.

Brahmins and the magi. With reſpect to the Tartars and Siberians, Van Strahlenburg, there cited, after remarking how univerſal a veneration prevails through all northern Tartary for the ſacred number THREE, acquaints us that " a race of Tartars, called Jakuthi, who are idolaters, and the moſt numerous people of all Siberia, adore in fact only one indiviſible God under three different denominations, which, in their vernacular tongue, are ARTUGON, SCHUGO-TEUGON, TANGARA;" the firſt of which words Colonel Grant tranſlates *Creator of all things*; the ſecond, *the God of armies*; and the third he renders, *Amor ab utroque procedens*, the Spirit of heavenly love, proceeding from the two former.

The celebrated SIBERIAN MEDAL, publiſhed by Dr. Parſons, and now depoſited in the valuable imperial cabinet at St. Peterſburg, on one ſide of which is engraved the figure of a tri-une deity, and, on the other ſide, certain Thibetian characters, illuſtrative of that figure, was found in an old ruined chapel, together with many ancient manuſcripts, near the river Kemptſchyk, which falls into the great river Jeniſei near its head. It is compoſed, according to M. Van Strahlenburg, of a ſubſtance reſembling *terra ſigillata*,

and is of the exact ſhape and ſize of the accompanying engraving, the border of one part of the medal being very much corroded. Of this medal, Dr. Parſons's deſcription is as follows: "The image, which appears upon one ſide, and which repreſents a deity, is one human figure as to the body and lower extremities, but is diſtinguiſhed above by three heads. The figure ſits croſs-legged upon a low ſofa, or ſtool, in the manner of Eaſtern ſovereigns: an arched urn, *or ſomething reſembling it*, is under the ſofa, but ſeems empty. It is thought that this figure is thus made, with one body, three heads, and ſix arms, from an idea prevailing among thoſe who fabricated it of a Trinity in Unity."* To this account of Dr. Parſons I ſhall add the remark of Strahlenburg; that the people who fabricated this figure were perhaps of opinion that the firſt perſon in it, content with having created all things, reſted in tranquillity: they therefore drew him with his hands folded acroſs, as if he had reſigned all care of the univerſe to the other two: and they figured out this his pre-eminence by adorning his head with a high mitre-cap. The inſcription on the oppoſite ſide of the medal is in Engliſh, as

* Remains of Japhet, p. 187, ubi ſequent.

as follows: "The bright and ſacred image of Deity, conſpicuous in three figures. Gather the holy purpoſe of God from THEM: love HIM." The mode of expreſſion and the alternate uſe of the ſingular and the plural noun deciſively mark the real ſentiments and intent of thoſe who cauſed it to be thus engraved.

Dr. Parſons deſcribes this triple image as ſeated upon a low ſofa, with an *arched urn*, or *ſomething reſembling it*, underneath. It is rather ſurpriſing that our author, who was by profeſſion a phyſician, an order of men to whom one ſhould ſuppoſe botany ought to be ſomewhat familiar, and a member of the Society of Antiquaries, in whoſe noble engraved collection the lotos perpetually appears ſculptured on innumerable medallions, vaſes, and other precious relics of Egyptian and Aſiatic antiquities, ſhould have not diſcovered that the urn, or cup, alluded to, is that of the lotos. In reſpect to the figure itſelf, it is evidently the Indian Triad, Brahma, Veeſhnu, and Seeva, who are portrayed ſitting upon that lotos, the uſual throne of the fabulous perſonages of Oriental mythology; and it is one among many other forcible and direct teſtimonies over how vaſt an extent of Aſia,

in ancient periods, the religion, and with it probably the laws and ſciences, of Hindoſtan were diffuſed.

While in theſe remote northern regions it would be improper to paſs unnoticed by the ancient race and religious rites of Scandinavia, I have elſewhere endeavoured, by a chain of ſtrong evidence, to demonſtrate that their firſt celebrated god Oden, or Woden, was no other than the Taut of Phœnicia, the Hermes of Egypt, the elder Buddha or Boodh of India, the Fo of China, and the Mercury of Greece and Rome. In ſhort, that the religion of almoſt every nation of the earth, previous to the happy diffuſion of the Chriſtian doctrine, exhibited little elſe beſides the ſhattered fragments of one grand ſyſtem of primitive, I do not ſay the earlieſt, theology, once prevalent in the Greater Aſia. Not the leaſt forcible of the arguments adduced to ſupport this hypotheſis, an hypotheſis that gives to Britain, in the earlieſt periods of the world, a colony of Brahmins, or at leaſt of Brahmin-taught ſages of the ſect of Boodh, are thoſe derived from the ſtriking ſimilitude of the ſuperſtitious ceremonies inſtituted and obſerved in thoſe reſpective regions, and the very ſingular circumſtance of the Indian god and planet Boodh, under the

name of Woden and Mercury, conferring his name, over all the northern and weſtern empires of Europe, upon one particular day of the week. This remarkable fact is evidenced in the inſtance of the BOODH WAR, or dies Mercurii, of India being the very ſame fourth day of the week which the Scandinavians conſecrated to Oden, which our Anglo-Saxon anceſtors denominated Woden's dag, and which we call Wedneſday. I ſhall not farther anticipate what will ſhortly be preſented to the reader on this curious ſubject, than by remarking that both Keyſler and Mallet unite in aſſigning to this god-king Oden an Aſiatic origin, and in aſſerting that the mythology which he introduced was the mythology, not of a cold ungenial region where the efforts of a lively imagination are checked by the rigour of the climate and objects that inſpire gloom and melancholy, but of a warm, luxurious, ſouthern realm, where an active, vigorous, fancy, under the impetuous goad of ardent paſſions, and animated by the moſt enlivening and charming objects, forms the moſt romantic images, and indulges its natural propenſities to gaiety by the moſt mirthful feſtivals and the moſt ſplendid rites.

In

In reſpect to the Scandinavian religion, I ſhall only for the preſent obſerve, that, in regard to the doctrine in queſtion, it does not differ from other codes of religious inſtitution in Aſia; for, it plainly inculcates the worſhip of a triple DEITY in the mythologic perſons of ODEN, FREA, and THOR.*

Concerning the firſt of theſe deities I think it has been in my power to produce inconteſtable evidence of his being the very identical perſonage denominated Taut, Hermes, and Boodh, through all the Eaſt. M. Mallet has produced as irrefragable proof that FREA, the ſecond perſon in this Scandinavian Triad, is no other than the celebrated Dea Syria, adored at Babylon, and the Venus Urania of the Perſians. She ſeems, indeed, to be the prolific mother of all things, the great principle of fecundity, and her name and rites demonſtrate her cloſe affinity with the RHEA of the Greeks, to whoſe honour they ſmote the reſounding cymbal, while the ſacred melody myſteriouſly ſhodowed out the harmony that prevails through univerſal nature. She gave her name to the ſixth day of the week, which was conſecrated to her under the denomination of FREYTAG, that is Frea's day, ſynonymous

* Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 96.

ſynonymous with our *Friday*; and, in direct teſtimony that her character is not unconnected with that of Venus Urania, as aſſerted by M. Mallet, may be adduced the remarkable circumſtance of that day being diſtinguiſhed in the weſtern world by the appellation of *Dies Veneris*.* With reſpect to THOR, the third of theſe northern deities, otherwiſe known among the Celtic nations by the name of TARANIS, a title which, in the Welch, that is, the old Cimbrian, language, M. Mallet obſerves, ſignifies *thunder*; he in every reſpect greatly reſembles the Eendra of the Indians, and the Jupiter Tonans of the Greeks and Romans. Thor præſidet in aëre, fulmina et fruges gubernat. This Scandinavian Jove ſeems to have been alſo armed with the CHACRA of Veeſhnu, recently inſcribed as inſtinct with life; for, ſays our author, THOR always carried a mace, or club, which, as often as he diſcharged it, returned of itſelf to the hand that launched it. He graſped this impatient and reſtleſs weapon, which, like the thunder-bolt of the Grecian Jove, vibrated to be gone, with ſtrong gauntlets of iron, and he wore around his loins a myſtic girdle which had

* Mallet's Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 95.

had the virtue to renovate his ſtrength, when neceſſary. "It was with theſe formidable arms that he overthrew the monſters and giants" (the Aſſoors, or evil dæmons of India) "when the gods ſent him to oppoſe their enemies."* To Thor, likewiſe, there was a day conſecrated, in the northern mythology, which ſtill retains his name in various languages of Europe. That day is, in Daniſh, called Thorſdag; in Swediſh, Torſdag; in Engliſh, Thurſday. It is not leſs worthy of obſervation that this day was, by the Romans and by all thoſe nations who have ſince adopted their aſtronomical language, called *Dies Jovis.*

In that valuable relic of northern genius, the EDDA, in which is contained an authentic epitome of Runic mythology, theſe three deities are repreſented as ſitting on three thrones, with each a crown on his head. The deſcription is curious, and I ſhall preſent it to the reader in the words of that eminent antiquary and worthy prelate, Dr. Percy, who tranſlated it, and who, as he honoured my juvenile productions with his patronage, I hope will extend it to the maturer efforts of my pen. In that poem, the aſtoniſhed Gangler,

* Northern Antiquities, vol. i. p. 97.

Gangler, being introduced into the lofty palace, or hall, of the gods, the roof of which "was formed of brilliant gold, beheld three thrones raiſed one above another, and upon each throne ſate a ſacred perſonage. Upon his aſking which of theſe was their king, the guide anſwered, he, who ſits on the loweſt throne, is the king, his name is HAR, *the lofty one*; the ſecond JAFNHAR, or *equal to the lofty one*; he, who ſits on the higheſt throne, is called THRIDI, or *the third.*"* The right reverend editor informs us, that, in the manuſcript of the EDDA, preſerved at Upſal, there is a repreſentation, or drawing, very rudely executed, of theſe three thrones, and of the three perſons ſitting upon them, before whom Gangler is drawn in a ſuppliant poſture. "Theſe figures," his lordſhip adds, "bear ſo great a reſemblance to the Roman Catholic pictures of the Trinity, that we muſt not wonder if ſome have imagined them to be an alluſion to that doctrine, particularly thoſe who ſuppoſe it was already known to Plato and ſome others among the ancient Pagans." To this remark I beg permiſſion to ſubjoin, that though I am very far from conceiving that theſe

* EDDA, tranſlated by the editor of Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. ii. p. 3.

theſe thrones have any immediate alluſion to the *thrones* which the pious Daniel ſaw *exalted*, (for, ſo the original words, tranſlated *caſt down*, ſhould be rendered,) whereon *the Ancient of Days* and the eternal Logos ſat in heaven to judge mankind, and much farther from drawing any compariſon between the IMMORTAL BEINGS that ſat upon the latter, and the *deified mortals* that were exalted to the former, thrones; yet I may ſurely contend for the perverſion of ſome ancient tradition, by which the mind of the Scandinavian theologue was impreſſed with the idea of a heaven, in which were erected three thrones for as many ſovereign gods: I ſay the *perverſion* of ſome ancient tradition, ſince it is for a Triad of Deity, the manifeſt veſtige of that nobler doctrine, a Trinity in Unity, that I, in this inſtance, alone contend. But, leſt I ſhould appear, amidſt theſe excurſive inquiries into the Pagan Triads, to have altogether loſt ſight of that nobler doctrine, I ſhall, upon this ſubject of *celeſtial thrones*, ſubmit to the reader a very curious paſſage, relative to the belief of the Jews in a tri-une Deity, which occurs in the ſame extenſive note of the Univerſal Hiſtory from which I borrowed a former extract on that ſubject, and in which the true meaning

ing of the paſſage in Daniel, juſt cited, reſpecting the throne of Deity, is diſcuſſed. The writers of the Talmud, they aſſert, have plainly unfolded their real opinion in agitating this queſtion: Why is *the throne of God*, in Daniel, mentioned in the plural number? "After ſeveral trifling anſwers, which are there given as the ſolution of ſeveral learned rabbies, one of whom pretends, that the plural implies *the thrones of God and David*: the laſt and concluding reply is to the following purpoſe: That it is blaſphemy to ſet the *creature* on the throne of the Creator, bleſſed for ever; and the whole is cloſed with theſe notable words: *If any one can ſolve this difficulty, let him do it; if not, let him go his way and not attempt it.*" The meaning, they obſerve, is too obvious to need explanation.*

That the vaſt continent of America was in the moſt remote periods viſited, and in part colonized, by the great naval and commercial powers of the ancient world, the Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Carthaginians, who, driven by tempeſts, or ſome of the various accidents attendant upon the perilous ſcience of navigation,

* See Ancient Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. iii. p. 12. Edit. oct. 1748.

tion, has been rendered highly probable by the learned Hornius in his book, on the Origin of the Americans, from various concurring circumſtances of affinity, enumerated by him, reſpecting the language, civil cuſtoms, and religious inſtitutions, prevailing among thoſe reſpective nations. The univerſal adoration of the ſolar orb by the Americans, and the remarkable fact mentioned by Sir William Jones in the Aſiatic Reſearches, that the firſt dynaſties of Peruvian kings are dignified, exactly as thoſe of India are, by the name of the ſun and moon,* may alſo be adduced in evidence that a race, wandering from the neighbourhood of Caucaſus, and traverſing the vaſt deſerts of Aſia, towards the north-eaſtern extremity, paſſed over the chain of iſlands, now known to exiſt between the two continents, and contributed their proportion towards the population of the new world. Whether in Manca, or MANCU, whom the Peruvian traditional books mention as their firſt emperor, may be traced, as Hornius aſſerts, any real veſtige of the race of Tartars called MANCHEW, or, in the appellation of *Maſatecæ*, one of the four nations

tions

* Vide Hornius de Orig. Gent. Americ. p. 105. Edit. oct. 1652.

tions of New Spain; and, in *Maſſachuſetæ*, a people of New England, the ancient MASSAGETÆ, are diſcovered; theſe are points on which, from the uncertainty of general etymology, it would be raſh to form any abſolute deciſion. But, on a recent peruſal of Acoſta's Authentic Hiſtory of South America, I could not avoid being ſtruck with his account of the dreadful ſanguinary ſacrifices of which both the Peruvians and Mexicans are enormouſly guilty, and I ſhall here inſert it, as forming a ſtriking and gloomy ſimilitude to the bloody ſacrifices of the old Scythians and Indians, deſcribed from Herodotus and Mr. Wilkins in many former pages. That ſimilitude is more particularly viſible in theſe two points, the firſt is, that the victims thus ſacrificed *are priſoners taken in war*; the ſecond is, that theſe are offered up *for the preſervation of the monarch.**

The ancient Peruvians uſed to ſacrifice "young children from foure, or ſix, yeares old unto tenne; and the greateſt parte of theſe ſacrifices were for the affaires that did concern the Ynca, as in ſickneſs, for his recovery; and, when he went to the warres, for victory. In theſe ſolemnities they ſacri-

* See the chapter on the Scythian ſacrifices.

ficed the number of two hundred children of the age defcribed above, which was a cruell and inhumane fpectacle. The manner of the facrifice was to *drowne* them and *bury* them with certaine reprefentations and ceremonies; and fometimes they cut off their heads, anointing themfelves with the blood. They did likewife facrifice *virgins*; and, if a native were ficke, and the ecclefiaftic tolde him confidently that he fhould die, they did then *facrifice his own fonne* to the SUNNE, or to VIRACHOCA, defiring them to be fatisfied with him, and *fpare the life of the father*."* In the following page of the fame author we read as follows: " Although they of Peru have furpaffed the Mexicans in the flaughter and facrifice of their *children*, yet they of Mexico have exceeded them, yea and all the nations of the worlde, in the great number of *men* which they facrificed, and in the horrible manner thereof. The men, thus facrificed, were *taken in the warres*, neither did they ufe thefe folemne facrifices, *but of captives*; in this they followed the cuftom of the ancients." Acofta might here have added, in particular that of the Scythians, and

* Acofta's Hiftorie of the Indies, p. 380. Edit. quart. Lond. 1604.

and the Druids, their *direct descendants*; as I have little doubt of very ſhortly demonſtrating. " In truth, the ordinary warres they carried on were only made to obtain captives for their ſacrifices; and, therefore, when they did fight, they laboured to take their enemies alive for the purpoſe of enjoying their ſacrifices."* The ſacrifice was performed upon a raiſed terrace, which cannot fail of bringing to the reader's recollection the high quadrangular altar of the Scythian ſavages, and the ceremony itſelf is thus deſcribed: " The ſovereign prieſt carried a great knife in his hand of a large and ſharpe flint: another prieſt carried a collar of wood, wrought in form *of a ſnake*:" he might have ſaid the *ſerpent*, the ſymbol of that ſun, whoſe devoted victims they were. " The other four prieſts, who aſſiſted, arranged themſelves in order, adjoining to the *pyramidal ſtone*, whereof I have ſpoken; being directly againſt the doore of the chapell of their idoll. This ſtone was ſo pointed, as that the man who was to be ſacrificed, being laid thereon upon his back, did bend in ſuch ſort, as occaſioned the ſtomach to ſeparate upon the ſlighteſt inciſion of the knife. When the ſacrificers

 were

* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 382.

were thus in order, they brought forth ſuch as had been taken in warre, and cauſed them *to mount up thoſe large ſtairs*, in rank, to the place where the miniſters were prepared. As they reſpectively approached thoſe miniſters, the latter ſeized them, two of them laying hold of the two feet and two more of the two hands of the unhappy victim, and in this manner caſt him on his back upon the pointed ſtone, while the fifth faſtened round his neck the ſerpentine collar of wood. The high prieſt then opened his ſtomach with a knife with wonderful dexterity and nimbleneſs, tearing out his heart with his hand, which he elevated ſmoking towards the ſunne, to whom he did offer it, and preſently, turning towards the idol, did caſt the heart towards it, beſmearing his face with the blood. In this manner were all the victims ſacrificed, and the bodies afterwards precipitated down the ſtairs, reeking with their gore. There were ever forty or fifty victims, at the leaſt, thus ſacrificed." The above paſſage I have given unabridged, becauſe in it are enumerated certain particulars, as the wooden ſerpent, the pyramidal ſtone and the offering to the Sun the heart of the victim, which exhibit ſtill leſs equivocal marks of the ſimilarity prevailing

vailing in the theology of the two continents: nor can I, for the ſame reaſon, prevail upon myſelf to omit his relation of their very remarkable veneration for fountains and rivers, and their frequent ablution in them. " Anciently there were Indians appointed to perform ſacrifice to fountains, ſprings, and rivers, whoſe waters paſſe through the towns. To this day, they are honoured with a conſiderable ſhare of the ancient reſpect paid to them: but a more eſpecial regard and reverence is paid to *the meeting of two rivers*; and there they perform ablutions, anointing themſelves firſt with the flower of mays, adding thereto divers ceremonies, as they do likewiſe in their bathes."* That portion, however, of the theological ſyſtem of the Americans, to which I wiſh to direct the more particular attention of the reader, is contained in the following paſſage, where this reverend father, in pious indignation, acquaints us, that " the devil, after his manner, hath brought a Trinity into their idolatry; for, the three images of the Sun, called APOMTI, CHURUNTI, and INTIQUAOQUI, are terms that ſignify FATHER and LORD SUN, the SON SUN, and the BROTHER SUN. In like manner they named the

* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 379.

THREE IMAGES of CHUQUILLA, which is the god that rules in the region of the air." But, according to this writer, they go a ſtep farther than the acknowledgement of a mere Triad of Deity, and worſhip a direct Trinity in Unity: for, "in Cuquiſaco there is a certaine oratory, where they worſhip a great idol, whom they call TANGATANGA, which ſignifies ONE IN THREE and THREE IN ONE."* Of theſe three Triads, the firſt very much reſembles the Triplaſios Mithras, or threefold power of God in the Sun, adored by the Perſians; and the ſecond is parallel to the Jupiter Pater, Jupiter Soter, and Jupiter Ultor, of the Greeks; or, if the reader chooſes rather to underſtand it phyſically, in reſpect to the ætherial element, this American Eendra may be the Jupiter Tonans, Jupiter Serenus, and Jupiter Pluvius, all which names are reſpectively conferred upon him by ancient writers; but the third is an evident perverſion of the dogma of a purer theology handed traditionally down, through a channel long ſince forgotten, from thoſe holy patriarchs, to whom the eternal Father was pleaſed to reveal the awful ſecrets of that nature, which, without ſuch revelation, it is utterly impoſſible for finite

* Acoſta's Hiſt. of the Indies, p. 412.

finite beings to fathom; the ſtupendous myſtery of a Trinity of Hypoſtaſes in the Unity of the Divine Eſſence.

But let us return to the great theatre of our preſent inveſtigation, to ASIA, and inquire if the ancient and celebrated empire of China affords a ſyſtem of theology illuſtrative of a ſubject ſo deeply involved in the obſcurity of Eaſtern philoſophy and entangled in the mazes of Oriental allegory.

In that remote and happy region, ſecluded not leſs by ſituation than by the wiſe policy of its ſovereigns from all intercourſe with the other nations of the earth, the true religion imported, as ſome think, by Noah himſelf, or one of his pious poſterity, flouriſhed longeſt unadulterated.* A ſucceſſion of virtuous and magnificent monarchs, deſcending for near three thouſand years in regular ſucceſſion from the great FOHI, whoever he was, made it the proudeſt glory of their reſpective reigns to ſupport it by their whole authority, and enforce it by the noble and ſplendid example of regal piety.

* See Shuckford's Connexions, vol. i. p. 33, and Sir Walter Raleigh's Hiſtory of the World, p. 54. The ſubject is extenſively conſidered in the Hiſtory itſelf.

Since it is my intention, in the enſuing hiſtory, occaſionally to conſider India upon the great ſcale of its more extended geography, as the ancients ſeem to have underſtood the term, and as ſtated by Sir William Jones in the Aſiatic Reſearches,* that is to ſay, as an empire extending from the great northern range of Caucaſus to the extreme ſouthern point of Sinhala, or Ceylone, and from the frontiers of Perſia on the weſt to the Chineſe Ocean on the eaſt, it will be my province hereafter to detail a variety of circumſtances that have relation to the early hiſtory of China, at preſent ſo little known, which will afford the ſtrongeſt corroboration to the Moſaic hiſtory, and inconteſtibly evince that the great lines of the moſt ancient Aſiatic and the Chriſtian theology are the ſame. From an elaborate compariſon which I have alſo made of the moſt ancient hiſtories of China, as they ſtand tranſlated and epitomized, in Couplet, Martinius, and Du Halde, from thoſe celebrated Chineſe books of profound antiquity the XU-KIM, or *book* of *books*, containing the annals of the three firſt imperial dynaſties; the XI-KIM, a more extenſive hiſtorical detail; and the writings of Confucius, with ſuch authen-

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* See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i, p. 418.

tic Sanſcreet accounts of Indian hiſtory as I have been able to procure, I have the moſt confident hopes that new light will be reflected as well upon the intricate hiſtory of thoſe countries as upon that of Japan. The hiſtory of the latter country, by Kæmpfer, has in the courſe of that review been of infinite ſervice to me, ſince, as an immemorial connexion has ſubſiſted between theſe three nations, which, after all that has been written by De Guignes and the learned Pauw, have probably all three deſcended from one common ſtock, the early hiſtory of the one muſt, under certain reſtrictions and with due allowances for the changes of cuſtoms and opinions during a long courſe of ages, be conſidered as the hiſtory of the others. I ſhall, in this place, preſent to the view of the reader a few of the points in which that affinity may be clearly traced; and, in the firſt place, let us attend to it in regard to their theology.

Martinius, who, from a reſidence of ten years upon the ſpot, and from underſtanding both the letters, or characters, and language of the country, muſt be ſuppoſed well qualified to judge of their religious doctrines and practices, aſſerts that they anciently worſhipped one SUPREME GOD, a ſpirit, *nullis*

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ad religionem exciendum ſimulachris aut ſtatuis uſi, uſing neither images or figures to excite the devotion of the people, becauſe as the Deity was every where preſent, and his nature exalted far above the reach of human comprehenſion, it was impoſſible by any external image properly to repreſent him to the ſenſes of men. Therefore he obſerves, nullum in iis templis *antiquitus* idolum viſebatur, ſed ſimplex tabella, in qua ſinenſi linguâ literis aureis exaratum erat, ſpiritualis cuſtodis urbis ſedes; no idol in the moſt ancient periods of their empire was to be ſeen in all their temples, but only an unornamented tablet, upon which was engraved, in large Chineſe characters, in gold, the following inſcription: THE SANCTUARY OF THE SPIRITUAL GUARDIAN OF THE CITY. This pure worſhip of the Deity, whom they denominated XANG-TI, or TYEN, continued unadulterated till after the death of Confucius, which took place 500 years previous to the Chriſtian æra, and is a remarkable and almoſt ſolitary inſtance of the pure primeval worſhip flouriſhing among a people confining upon nations immerſed in the baſeſt idolatries of Aſia. That they believed in the exiſtence of

of ſubordinate ſpirits, the miniſters of the great God in the government of the univerſe, and that they paid an inferior kind of homage to thoſe ſpirits, is to be accounted for in the perſuaſion, before noticed as being ſo generally prevalent in Aſia, that they might be their interceſſors with offended Omnipotence, and avert his apprehended vengeance.

Confucius, the nobleſt and moſt divine philoſopher of the pagan world, was himſelf the innocent occaſion of the introduction of the numerous and monſtrous idols that in after-ages diſgraced the temples of China; for, having in his dying moments encouraged his diſconſolate diſciples by prophecying SI FAM YEU XIM GIN, *in occidente erit* SANCTUS, in the weſt the Holy One will appear; they concluded that he meant the god Bhood of India, and immediately introduced into China the worſhip of that deity with all the train of abominable images and idolatrous rites, by which that groſs ſuperſtition was in ſo remarkable a manner diſtinguiſhed. To what holy and illuſtrious perſonage, about to appear in the weſt, Confucius, who ſeems to have inherited at once the ſublime virtues and the

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prophetic ſpirit of the old patriarchs, alluded, ſhall preſently be unfolded.*

Were it not for the very ſingular circumſtance, recorded in the Chineſe hiſtories, that the mother of Fohi, the great anceſtor of the Chineſe, was embraced and rendered pregnant by A RAINBOW, a mythological fable very probably originating either in ſome miſconceived tradition concerning the *bow*, which was firſt manifeſted to Noah as a token that the waters ſhould never again inundate the globe, or elſe alluſive to his having emerged from the boſom of the ſurrounding ocean to commence a new ſcene of exiſtence upon the renovated earth; were it not alſo recorded in the ſame hiſtories that Fohi carefully trained up *ſeven ſorts of creatures*, which he annually ſacrificed to the Supreme Spirit of Heaven and Earth, a circumſtance ſo exactly conſonant to the account of Scripture, that Noah took into the ark of every clean beaſt *by ſevens*, and of fowls in the air *by ſevens*; were it not that they fix the firſt reſidence of this their great anceſtor, where, according to the moſt ancient Sanſcreet traditions, the firſt Chineſe colony did abſolutely ſettle, in the

* Vide Couplet. Scient. Sinic. p. 78, and Martini Martinii Sinicæ Hiſtoriæ, lib. iv. p. 149. Edit. duod. Amſterdam, 1659.

the province of XENSI, to the north-weſt of India; were it not probable, from the total ſilence of Scripture concerning the future incidents of the life of ſo important a perſonage as the great and favoured patriarch and the mad unreſtrained act of his progeny in building the tower of Babel, that he really did migrate from the place where the ark reſted to ſome ſpot, remote from his degenerate offspring, on the extremities of Aſia; did not the very name of him, who builded the firſt altar after the flood, and offered thereon the firſt victim to the Lord, ſignify OBLATION, whence doubtleſs Noah was deſignated as the ſacrificer on the old celeſtial ſphere, under the name of Shin Num, his immediate ſucceſſor in the government of China, or rather himſelf by another appellative, for theſe two perſons are denominated the founders of that empire; did not we recognize the *Oriental* and in particular the Arabian denomination of China, which is Sin, and in Num the Menu of India, which words combined together may be rendered into Latin *Sinicus Noah,* the Chineſe Noah: were it not for theſe circumſtances, which ſo decidedly point to the perſon of Noah, I ſhould be inclined to agree in

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opinion with Mr. Bryant, that, by Fohi, the Chinefe meant the parent of the human race himfelf, inftead of the venerable father of the regenerated world.

If Mr. Bryant's hypothefis could be admitted, the eighteen thoufand years, which he obferves are faid to have intervened between the reign of the firft and fecond emperors of China, by being confidered as centuries only, (for which interpretation of the word thoufand fome learned chronologifts have ftrenuoufly contended,) will come very near the fcriptural account of time that elapfed from the period of the creation to the deluge. In that cafe, however, Fohi and Shin Num muft be confidered as diftinct characters, living in very remote ages, which their hiftory does not warrant;* but that, at all events, Shin Num and Noah were the fame perfon, and that both meant the Menu of India, can fcarcely admit of a doubt, efpecially when Mr. Bryant's judicious obfervation, that, in Hoang, or Hoam-ti, the fon of Shin Num, the veftiges of the fcriptural name of Ham may plainly be traced. As a farther corroboration of this fuppofition, I fhall for the prefent only add that the

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* See Mr. Bryant's Analyfis, vol. iii. p. 583.

ſeven regal deſcendants of Shin Num, who, according to Couplet, reigned after him, that is, in the provinces ſubject to the ſupreme head of the empire, were doubtleſs the ſeven Reyſhees, or holy men of India; and theſe, after all, were probably no other than the ſeven perſons who went into the ark with Noah, forming, with himſelf, the famous OGDOAS of antiquity.

From an author compelled in a great degree, on account of the repeated attacks made by ſceptics upon the Moſaic hiſtory through the ſides of Indian and Chineſe antiquities, not to paſs unnoticed theſe circumſtances, the reader will naturally be led to expect a more extenſive inveſtigation of theſe abſtruſe points hereafter. I ſhall, therefore, at preſent, only inquire if any ſentiments, of a nature conſonant to thoſe already demonſtrated to have been ſo widely diffuſed through Aſia, prevailed in any ancient theological code of China. The purity of their primæval theology has been noticed. They originally adored no ſculptured images of the Deity, although they worſhipped him in the emanations of guardian and benevolent ſpirits that iſſue from the exhauſtleſs fountain of Deity. The doctrine of thoſe

emanations, and the lapſe and immortality of the ſoul, afford the ſtrongeſt reaſon for ſuppoſing that the tradition of a God-Mediator, to appear upon earth after a certain revolution of ages, was cheriſhed from time immemorial in China. Since Confucius ſtrictly adhered to, and vigorouſly enforced in his writings, the pure doctrine of his country, which equally forbade all images of the Deity and the deification of dead men; and, in conſequence, could not conſiſtently recommend to them the groſs idolatry of the Bhudſoiſts; it is highly probable that this devout and venerable perſonage, when he told them *to look to the weſt for the* HOLY ONE *that was to appear upon earth*, was inſpired with ſome foreknowledge of the great event of the redemption, and by divine inſpiration was enabled to predict the advent of the Meſſiah in Paleſtine, a country which is exactly ſituated after the manner deſcribed; and, indeed, is the moſt weſtern country of Aſia, in reſpect to China.

In direct and poſitive proof that I am not attributing to the Chineſe theological notions which they did not in the moſt ancient æras of their empire poſſeſs; and, in

in particular, that they really did, either traditionally, or by revelation, entertain a rooted belief of the pacification of the Divine Being by means of a human oblation of royal deſcent and of diſtinguiſhed piety, I ſhall produce from their moſt authentic hiſtorians an inſtance of a moſt amiable and virtuous monarch, CHING-TANG, the founder of the ſecond imperial dynaſty of China, bearing the denomination of XANG, being called upon by the public voice, at a period of national diſtreſs, to be the propitiatory ſacrifice of offended heaven. An univerſal barrenneſs, ariſing from continued drought, having for ſeven years together deſolated the kingdom and thinned the inhabitants of it, Ching-tang was told by the prieſts, who interpreted the will of heaven, that its vengeance could only be appeaſed by a human ſacrifice, and he readily became the devoted victim of that vengeance. The aged king, ſays Martinius,* having laid by his imperial robes, cut off the venerable grey hairs of his head, ſhaved his beard, pared his nails, and ſubjected himſelf to other preparatory ceremonies, eſteemed indignities in China, barefooted,

* Vide Martini Martinii Hiſtoriæ Sinicæ, lib. iii. p. 75.

footed, covered over with aſhes, and in the poſture of a condemned criminal, approached the altar of ſacrifice, where with ſuppliant hands he entreated heaven to launch the thunder-bolt of its wrath, and accept the life of the monarch as an atonement for the ſins of the people. The Chineſe hiſtories add that after he had finiſhed his prayer, and for ſome time devoutly waited the awful ſtroke, which was to cruſh the ſovereign and ſave the nation, (a ſtroke which heaven in remembrance of his piety and reſignation forbore to inflict,) the ſky became ſuddenly black with clouds, and the rain deſcended in torrents, ſo that the ſteril earth ſhortly reſumed its wonted fertility, and unbounded plenty reigned over the whole empire.* In the annals of China this ſolemn fact is recorded to have happened in the eighteenth century before Chriſt, and it is very remarkable, that, in the very ſame century, according to Uſher† and the chronology of our Bibles, the ſeven years famine in Egypt happened. From this circumſtance we are naturally induced to conclude, that the dearth ſpoken of in Scripture

* Martinius, p. 76. Le Compte, p. 319.

† Vide Uſherii Annales, p. 15.

ture was general throughout the Eaſt; and indeed it is evident, from Joſeph's ſupplying all the neighbouring countries with grain, that it was not confined to the Egyptian territories alone. Thus wonderfully do the ancient archives of a great and enlightened nation, ſecluded for three thouſand centuries from all connection with the reſt of the world, whence ariſes an impoſſibility that thoſe archives ſhould be adulterated, in this as well as in many other inſtances which it will fall to my province to point out hereafter, bear deciſive teſtimony as well to the authenticity of the Moſaic hiſtory as to the verity of the great outlines of the Moſaic theology. Among theſe the *veſtigia*, for which alone I muſt again repeat that I contend, the *veſtigia* of a pure undebaſed Trinity, are not the leaſt viſible.

It is the reſult of both extenſive reading and perſonal inquiry, made by a learned friend in Aſia, that I am able to deſcribe the vaſt body of the Chineſe nation, thoſe few excepted who practiſe the pure and refined precepts of the great Confucius, as divided, at this day, like the Indians, into two grand religious ſects, if, in fact, the name of *religious* may be beſtowed upon thoſe who

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have ſo far deviated from the pure primæval devotion of their anceſtors, as either, on the one hand, to be plunged into the groſſeſt materialiſm, or, on the other, into the moſt complicated and multifarious idolatry. It is ſurely no ſmall honour for Chriſtianity to be able to bring not a few proofs of its grand and fundamental truths from the very creed and practice of its moſt inveterate oppoſers; to find its pure principles lying dormant in the deſpumated and feculent droſs of paganiſm, and the hallowed ſpark of that original flame which blazed upon the altar erected by Noah, on his deſcent from Ararat, occaſionally beaming forth amidſt the embers ſmoaking upon the polluted ſhrines of falſe and fictitious deities.

The firſt and moſt ancient of theſe ſects is called *the ſect of immortals*, and the founder of it was LAO-KIUN, who flouriſhed before Confucius, and about the year 600, preceding the Chriſtian æra. Although the principles of Epicurus have been attributed to this great philoſopher, and though the followers of Lao-kiun at this day are, as has been obſerved, rank materialiſts, yet, from the account of his writings given by Couplet and Le Compte, there is the greateſt reaſon to

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ſuppoſe that his original doctrines have been groſſly corrupted and miſrepreſented by his diſciples. They are called *immortals*, ſay theſe writers, from a certain liquor, which LAO-KIUN invented, and which, he affirmed, would, if drank, make men immortal. This has every appearance of being an allegory, and hereby may be meant no other than the AMREETA, or ambroſial nectar of the Brahmins. They are notoriouſly guilty of the worſhip of dæmons, and temples of great ſumptuouſneſs and magnitude are erected to thoſe dæmons in various parts of the empire. It was the leading feature in LAO-KIUN's ſyſtem of philoſophical theology, and a ſentence which he continually repeated as the foundation of all true wiſdom, that TAO, *the eternal Reaſon, produced* ONE; *One produced* TWO; *Two produced* THREE; *and* THREE *produced all things:* a moſt ſingular axiom for a heathen philoſopher, and, as Le Compte, from whoſe Memoirs of China I have verbatim copied the above ſentence, obſerves relative to it, a very evident proof that he muſt have had ſome obſcure notions of a Trinity.*

The other great ſect of China is that of the Bhudſoiſts, or thoſe who worſhip the

* Le Compte's Memoirs of China, p. 314.

Indian god Bhudda under the ſoftened name of Fo, as, from not having either B or D among the characters that form their alphabet, they were unable to pronounce the prior appellation. The Bhudſoiſts have been denominated downright atheiſts; the contrary, however, may be fairly inferred from the practice of thoſe who worſhip a ſtone as the image of God. That our Britiſh Druids were a race of Eaſtern philoſophers of the ſect of the Indian Bhudda, I mean the elder, who was the ſame identical perſon as the Phœnician Taut, the Egyptian Hermes, the Woden of the Scandinavians, and the Mercury of the Greeks and Romans, I hope, ſhortly, to produce very clear evidence in an expreſs treatiſe upon the antiquity of Stonehenge. I had hopes of being able to compreſs the ſubject ſufficiently to form a chapter of this volume of Indian Antiquities; but I found myſelf obliged, occaſionally, to diverge ſo far from ſubjects immediately connected with India, and to take ſuch an extenſive range, in proof of my poſitions, through every region of Aſia, or rather of the earth, that ſcarcely an octavo *volume*, and much leſs a *chapter* of ſuch a volume, would be ſufficient to contain the

reſult

result of the inquiry. I reserve that interesting subject for a distinct Dissertation.

The Bhudsoists of China have had the skill to render their real opinions less easy of discussion, by adopting the artifice made use of by the ancient Egyptian and Greek philosophers, to veil their mysterious tenets, that of a two-fold doctrine; the one EXOTERIC, or external, the other ESOTERIC, or interior. If, however, they are at all acquainted with the maxims of the genuine, that is, the elder, Bhudda of India; for, I believe the second to be a mere fiction springing up out of the Eastern system of the Metempsychosis and divine emanations; they must have some ideas of a triune Deity, intended in their motley theology; for, the Phœnician Taut, their famous Bhudda, if Suidas upon that word may be credited, had his firname of Trismegist, from his decided assertions on that point of faith. Hence too his caduceus, which I have had engraved for the more particular inspection of the reader, is adorned with that old Egyptian symbol of Deity, *the globe, wings, and serpent*. Nor should it, on this subject, be forgotten, that this caduceus is described by the ancients as producing *three leaves* together, a sacred trefoil, intimating the three-

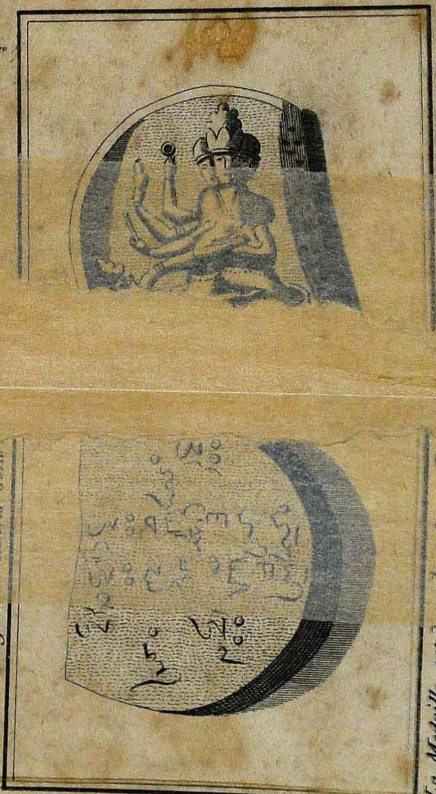
fold diſtinction in the Deity, for which he was ſo ſtrenuous an advocate. Thus Homer, in the Hymn to Mercury, calls it ῥαβδον χρυσειην ΤΡΙΠΕΤΗΛΟΝ, the golden THREE-LEAFED wand.*

It is now high time that we ſhould leave the eaſtern confines of Aſia, and, bending our progreſs towards its weſtern extremities, reſume our inveſtigation of the ſeveral Trinities of Greece.

* Vide Hymn. in Mercurium, line 72.

CHAPTER

THE SIBERIAN MEDAL.



Medaille trouvée dans un Temple des I... De son Hist. Geog. les caracteres sont ... bourg la rapporte Table Vde ...

La Medaille est dans le Cabinet Im... ...sbourg.

l'Inscription cyjointe dans tout son etendue en Langue Irlandoise, avec la Traduction Latine par M. le B. de Grante Col. Capitaine au Reg. de Lally.

Jeanamayl Samlvȝad · Nominta De ann yna ... ... ȝe Naomt ... ...
Alma Imago Sancta Dei in tribus Imaginibus - hisce Colligite Sanctam voluntatem Dei ex illis. * Diligite eum.

* ... Naom ... De ... Aperit Sanctam volontalem Dei vobis ... abrev.

THE TANJORE MAHA... SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAPTER VII.

—— τι γαρ ἐςι Πλατων,
Ἡ Μωσης Ἀττικιζων.

The Chaldæan and Egyptian, being the Source of the GREEK, *Theology; the Doctrines relative to a Trinity taught by* PYTHAGORAS, PARMENIDES, *and* PLATO, *ought not to be wondered at, nor their true Alluſion denied.—The extenſive Travels of Pythagoras and Plato, into the Higher Aſia and Egypt, detailed.—Their reſpective* TRINITIES, *and that of* PARMENIDES, NUMENIUS, *and the later Greek Philoſophers, conſidered.—A retroſpective Summary of the Whole of the Argument on the Chriſtian and Pagan Trinities in the preceding Chapters.*

AFTER the numerous quotations, in the preceding pages, from the Grecian philoſophers, moſt eminent in the Pagan world, quotations which demonſtrate they were by no means unimpreſſed with notions on this point, ſimilar to thoſe entertained by the more

more ancient ſages of Aſia; I ſhall, perhaps, be excuſed from ſwelling theſe pages with an infinite number of paſſages that might be ſelected from the works of Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, and others, in additional proof of what has been already advanced on this ſubject. I muſt again repeat, that it was from the fountains of Chaldæan, Perſian, Indian, and Egyptian, learning, that thoſe Grecian ſages, as well by the channel of Orpheus as by their own perſonal travels in thoſe countries, derived that copious ſtream of theological knowledge, which was afterwards, by their diſciples, ſo widely diffuſed through Greece and Italy; having, therefore, ſucceſsfully explored the ſource, there is leſs occaſion for us to waſte our time in minutely tracing the deſcending current.

It may, with truth, be affirmed, that, there was ſcarcely one of all the celebrated philoſophers, who eſtabliſhed the ſeveral ſchools of Greece, diſtinguiſhed by their names, who had not reſided, for a conſiderable period, either in one or the other of the countries juſt mentioned. A production of the evidence, on which this aſſertion is founded, will probably be conſidered of no ſmall weight in this diſcuſſion.

Let us commence our retroſpect with the travels of Pythagoras, who flouriſhed in the ſixth century, before the birth of Chriſt. According to the account of his diſciple Jamblichus,* the firſt voyage of Pythagoras, in purſuit of knowledge, after the completion of his academical exerciſes at Samos, was to Sidon, his native place, where he was early initiated into all the myſterious rites and ſciences of Phœnicia, a country whence, I have before obſerved, the elder Taut emigrated to Egypt, and where the profound Samothracian orgia and the Cabiric rites were firſt inſtituted. From Phœnicia, our philoſopher travelled into Egypt, and there, with an unabated avidity after ſcience, as well as with unexampled perſeverance, continued, under the ſevereſt poſſible diſcipline, purpoſely impoſed upon him by the jealous prieſts of that country, during *two-and-twenty years,* ſucceſſively to imbibe the ſtream of knowledge at Heliopolis, at Memphis, and at Dioſpolis, or Thebes. Aſtoniſhed at his exemplary patience and abſtinence, the haughty Egyptian prieſthood relaxed from their eſtabliſhed rule of never divulging the arcana of their theology to a ſtranger; for, according to another

* Jamblichus in Vita Pythag. cap. 13.

another writer of his life, Diogenes Laertius, he was admitted into the inmoſt adyta of their temples, and there was taught thoſe ſtupendous truths of their myſtic philoſophy, which were never before revealed to any foreigner.* He is ſaid even to have ſubmitted to circumciſion, that he might more rigidly conform to their dogmas, and leave no point of their moſt recondite ſciences unexplored. It was during this long reſidence and ſecluſion, amidſt the prieſts of the Thebais, that he aroſe to that high proficiency in geometrical and aſtronomical knowledge, to which no Greek before him had ever reached, and few ſince have attained.

But all this aggregate of Egyptian wiſdom could not ſatisfy the mind of Pythagoras, whoſe ardour for ſcience ſeems to have increaſed with the diſcouragements thrown in the way of his obtaining it. He had heard of the Chaldæan and Perſian Magi and the renowned Brachmanes of India, and he was impatient to explore the hallowed caves of the former and the conſecrated foreſts of the latter. He was meditating this delightful excurſion at the time that Cambyſes commenced his celebrated expedition againſt Egypt,

* Diogenes Laertius, lib. ii. p. 98.

Egypt, which terminated in the plunder of its treaſuries, the ſlaughter of its gods, and the burning of its temples. During the remainder of the period of his abode in Egypt, he had the mortification to be a ſpectator of all thoſe nameleſs indignities which his patrons and inſtructors underwent from that ſubverter of kingdoms and enemy of ſcience. Pythagoras himſelf was taken priſoner, and ſent with other captives to Babylon. The Chaldæan Magi, however, at that metropolis, received with tranſport the wandering ſon of ſcience. All the ſublime arcana inculcated in the ancient Chaldaic oracles, attributed to the elder Zoroaſter, were now laid open to his view. He renewed, with intenſe ardour, thoſe aſtronomical reſearches, in which the Babylonians ſo eminently excelled; and learned from them new ideas relative to the motions, power, property, and influences, of the heavenly bodies, as well as their ſituations in the heavens, and the vaſt periods they took to complete their revolutions.

Babylon muſt have been, at that particular period, the proudeſt and moſt honoured capital upon earth, ſince it is evident, from Dr. Hyde,* that both the prophet Ezekiel and the

* See Hyde de Relig. vet. Perſ. p. 361.

the ſecond Zoroaſter, the friend of Hyſtaſpes, whom Porphyry calls ZARATUS, (a name exceedingly ſimilar to the Oriental appellation of ZERATUSHT,) reſided there at the ſame time. The former, attached to the man who had ſubmitted in Egypt to one fundamental rite preſcribed by the Jewiſh law, inſtructed him in the awful principles of the Hebrew religion; the latter made him acquainted with the doctrines of the two predominant principles in nature, of GOOD and EVIL, and unfolded to his aſtoniſhed view all the ſtupendous myſteries of Mithra. Twelve years, according to Porphyry, were ſpent by Pythagoras in this renowned capital, from which, when he had regained his liberty, determined to complete his treaſure of Aſiatic literature, he ſought the diſtant, but celebrated, groves of the Brachmans of India.* Among that ſecluded and ſpeculative race, he probably carried to the higheſt point of perfection, attainable in that age, thoſe aſtronomical inveſtigations, to which he was ſo deeply devoted: by them he was probably inſtructed in the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, which, to this day, is diſtinguiſhed by his name: among them he greatly enlarged the limits of his metaphyſical

* Porphyrius in Vita Pythag. p. 185, edit. Cantab.

metaphyſical knowledge: and from them he carried away the glorious doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, which he firſt divulged in Greece, and the fanciful doctrine of the Metempſychoſis.

Plato was born at Athens, in the 88th Olympiad, or about 430 years before Chriſt. He had the honour and advantage of having Socrates for the guide and preceptor of his youth. Already inſtructed in all the intricate doctrines of the Pythagorean philoſophy, on the death of that martyr to the cauſe of truth, he travelled firſt into Italy, and then into Egypt, as well to mitigate the anguiſh he felt at the loſs of ſo excellent and wiſe a man, as to increaſe the treaſures of knowledge with which his mind was already ſo amply ſtored. Cicero expreſſly informs us, that, in viſiting Egypt, his principal aim was to learn mathematics and eccleſiaſtical ſpeculations among the barbarians;* for, by this diſgraceful appellation, the faſtidious Greeks ſtigmatized all foreign nations. He travelled, ſays Valerius Maximus, over the whole of that country, informing himſelf, by means of the prieſts, during his progreſs, of geometry in all its various and multifold branches, as well as of their

* Cicero de Finibus, cap. 5.

their aſtronomical obſervations: and, while the young ſtudents at Athens were inquiring for Plato, and languiſhing for his inſtructions, that philoſopher was indulging his contemplations on the ſhores of the Nile, ſurveying the canals cut from that river, and meaſuring the dams that reſtrained its riſing waters, being himſelf but a diſciple to the ſages of the Thebais.* From thoſe ſages, Pauſanias, in Meſſoniis, affirms he learned the immortality of the ſoul, and, from the ſtyle and tenour of his writings, it is pretty evident that he was deeply verſed in the ſacred books attributed to Hermes Triſmegiſt. It is equally evident that Plato had read with attention the Moſaic writings and hiſtory, not through the medium, as has been aſſerted, of the Greek tranſlation, (for, that tranſlation was not made till the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, which took place near two hundred years after the birth of Plato,) but by means of his own indefatigable exertion in acquiring languages and exploring the ſources of Oriental ſcience and traditions. Indeed the ſtudy of the Eaſtern languages, ſo neceſſary to a traveller in the Eaſt, and, in particular, the Egyptian and Phœnician, which differed only in dialect from

* Valerius Maximus, lib. viii. cap. 7.

from the Hebrew, cannot be ſuppoſed to be unattended to by a man fired with ſuch an inſatiable thirſt of learning as was Plato. Add to this, that, with the multitude of Jews, which, about that period of their diſſipation, flocked to Egypt, he could ſcarcely fail of frequently converſing, in order to penetrate into their ſacred records, and myſtic cabbala, ſo famous, but ſo little underſtood, throughout Aſia. The beſt evidence of this fact is to be found in his writings, where are to be met with ſuch repeated alluſions to what he denominates *παλαιοι λογοι*, ancient diſcourſes, or traditions, and certain *Συριοι και Φοινικοι μυθοι*, or Syrian and Phœnician fables, that it is impoſſible to conſider this philoſopher as not converſant in Hebrew antiquities. The contrary, in fact, was ſo manifeſt to Numenius, a Pythagorean philoſopher of the ſecond century, that, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, he exclaimed, *Τι γαρ εστι Πλατων, η Μωσης Ατ]ικιζων*; What is Plato but Moſes converſing in the language of Athens!*

Thus, in a curſory manner, have I traced the veſtigia of theſe two famous Greeks through thoſe countries where either the true theology was firſt propagated or firſt perverted.

* Clem. Alexand. Stromatu, lib. i. p. 411, edit Oxon.

Let us now proceed in a manner confiftent with the brevity we profefs to obferve, after fuch a wide range through the fchools of Afia, to examine the leading features of their refpective fyftems of theology.

It will fcarcely be contefted that Pythagoras borrowed from the Egyptian priefts, who were fo deeply involved in fymbols and hieroglyphics, that *fymbolical* and *ænigmatical* way of inftructing his difciples as to ethical and theological fubjects, which he fo univerfally adopted; and I fhall, hereafter, when confidering the literature of India, have occafion to prove that nearly all his moft famous fymbols have their origin, not in Grecian, but Oriental, ideas and manners. A fimilar obfervation holds good in refpect to his veneration for facred myftic *numbers*; for, when I inform the reader, that the ten numerical characters of arithmetic are originally of Indian, and not, as generally fuppofed, of Arabian, invention, he will entertain little doubt in what Eaftern country he learned, in fuch perfection, that abftrufe fcience. On that very particular and curious belief entertained both by Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, relative to the agency of good and evil DÆMONS, fome attendant on the human race, as a kind of guardian

guardian and familiar ſpirit, one of which ſpecies Socrates affirmed attended himſelf, and others, ſpleenful, malignant, and ever plotting their ruin, the ſource has been equally laid open in our review of the Chaldaic theurgy. It is, however, with thoſe ſublimer points in their theology, which have reference to the nature of God himſelf, that we have at preſent a more immediate concern.

This wiſe ancient ſtyled the ſupreme Deity the great Father of all, *το ἑν*, THE UNITY, and *μοναϛ*, THE MONAD; a term by which Pythagoras doubtleſs intended to expreſs his conceptions of the *ſimplicity* as well as *purity* of the divine nature. The ſole cauſe and firſt principle of all that exiſts, he eſteemed the Deity the centre of unity and ſource of harmony. He likewiſe conferred on this almighty Sovereign, the name by which Plato afterwards diſtinguiſhed the firſt hypoſtaſis of his Triad, *το ἀγαθον*, *the chief good*. From this eternal MONAD, however, from this primæval UNITY, according to Pythagoras and all his diſciples, *there ſprang an infinite* DUALITY.* By the term duality, ſays the Chevalier Ramſay, the learned author of a Diſſertation on the Theology and Mythology of the Ancients,

* Vide Diogenes Laertius, lib. viii. p. 507.

added to the Travels of Cyrus, we are not to underſtand two perſons of the Chriſtian Trinity, but a world of intelligent and corporeal ſubſtances, which is the effect whereof *unity* is the cauſe.* When the reader, however, ſhall have duly reflected on ALL that has been previouſly ſubmitted to his conſideration in the former part of this volume, to the doctrine of which this Pythagorean ſentiment is ſo perfectly conſentaneous, he will probably be induced to think, that, by ſo remarkable an expreſſion, Pythagoras intended to allude to the emanation of beings of an order far ſuperior to thoſe referred to in the page of that writer. Beſides, as Dr. Cudworth has judiciouſly obſerved concerning the opinions of Pythagoras, ſince he is generally acknowledged to have followed the principles of the Orphic theology, whoſe Trinity we have ſeen, and, as is allowed by Chevalier Ramſay himſelf, was Φως, Βȣλη, Ζωη; or LIGHT, COUNSEL, and LIFE; it cannot reaſonably be doubted that he adopted this among the other doctrines of Orpheus.†

The three hypoſtaſes that form the Trinity of Plato it is well known are το Αγαθον, Νȣς, often

* See les Voyages de Cyrus, tom. ii. p. 193, edit Rouen.

† Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, vol. i. p. 374.

often denominated by him Λογος, and Ψυχη κοσμȣ. When Plato, in various parts of his writings, calls his firſt hypoſtaſis, as he frequently does, ὁ πρῶτος Θεος and ὁ μεγιςος Θεων, and uſes terms, with reſpect to the other two hypoſtaſes, which mark a kind of ſubordination in this his Trinity, it is ſcarcely poſſible to miſtake an alluſion ſo plain to the higher TRIAD for which we contend. The countries through which he travelled, and the people with whom he converſed, immediately point out the ſource of a doctrine ſo ſingular, flowing from the pen of an unenlightened Pagan. It is very probable, that, from his acquaintance with Egyptian, Phœnician, and other Oriental, languages, intimately connected with the ſacred dialect, this philoſopher derived the term Λογ☉, which is the ſecond in his Trinity; for Λογ☉, as has been frequently before remarked in theſe pages, is the literal tranſlation of the Chaldaic Mimra, the ſacred appellative by which the ancient paraphraſts invariably underſtand the Meſſiah. The notion is entirely Hebraic. The Meſſiah was called the Mimra, or Word, becauſe, in the Moſaic account of the creation, that expreſſion ſo frequently occurs, *et* DIXIT *Deus*, and therefore it was a very unjuſt accuſation (although,

from his ignorance of the real fact, a very pardonable one) which Amelius, the Platonist, brought against St. John, when having read the first verse of that evangelist, where the term Λογος occurs no less than three times, he complained that John had transferred into his Gospel the mysterious expression of his master, exclaiming, "By Jupiter, this barbarian agrees in sentiment with our Plato, and, like him, constitutes the Λογος of God in the rank of a first principle!"* The fact is that St. John made use of an ancient and appropriate term, by which the Messiah was known to the Hebrew race, whereas Plato made use of it, because the expression frequently occurred in the exotic theology, which he had borrowed, without knowing either the original meaning or secondary allusion of the term.

It is still more probable, that the active divine agent, which, in the Mosaic writings, is called Πνευμα Θεȣ, is the same with that primæval principle, which, in reviewing the trismegistic theology of Hermes, we observed was denominated by a word similar to MIND, or INTELLIGENCE. This primitive principle is in the Orphic doctrines styled Ερως, Divine Love,

* Amelius citatus in Drusii Annotat. in John i. 1.

Love, generating all things; and, in the Platonic writings, with ſtill more marked alluſion to that ſupreme demiurgic Spirit, whoſe powerful breath infuſed into nature the firſt principles of life, is called Ψυχη κοσμȣ, or the SOUL OF THE WORLD.

Parmenides, according to Stanley's authorities, was of Elea, a city of Magna Grecia, that gave its name to the Eleatic ſect, to which Parmenides belonged. He flouriſhed in the 89th Olympiad. Involved in nearly equal obſcurity with the incidents of his life are the doctrines which he taught; they were written in verſe, and the ſubſtance of them is given in Plato's Parmenides, the leaſt intelligible of that philoſopher's productions. Stanley has not illumined that abſtruſe treatiſe by the epitome which he has given of its contents.* To Simplicius and Plotinus poſterity is indebted for the beſt explication of the precepts of his philoſophy, in which, however, amidſt ſurrounding darkneſs, the veſtigia of this doctrine are to be diſcerned. Of that philoſophical theology the great and fundamental maxim was that the Deity is ἑν και πολλα, or ONE and MANY; which words, if they do not allude to the *unity* of the divine Eſſence and the

* Stanley's Lives of the Philoſophers, p. 448.

the *plurality* of perſons in that Eſſence, it is difficult to decide to what they do allude. If the reader ſhould conceive, that, by this ſingular mode of expreſſing himſelf, Parmenides meant a phyſical, and not a divine, principle, Simplicius, cited by Cudworth, as an author well acquainted with that philoſopher's real opinions, will inform him otherwiſe, and that he wrote ὁ περι τȣ φυσικȣ στοιχειȣ, ἀλλα περι τȣ αυτȣ ὀντος; not concerning a phyſical element, but concerning the true ENS;* and I ſhall add to Cudworth's remarks on this ſubject, that the true ENS was no other than the Jehovah of the Hebrews, a word which Buxtorf (cited by me in a former page) aſſerts to mean ENS, EXISTENS, and whence, it is more than probable, the Greek word, deſcriptive of the divine entity, was derived. Plotinus, commenting on Plato's Parmenides, repreſents him as acknowledging THREE *divine unities ſubordinate:* το πρωτον ἑν, ὁ κυριωτερον ἑν, και δευτερον ἑν πολλα λεγων· και τριτον, ἑν και πολλα: "the firſt unity being that which is moſt perfectly and properly ONE; the ſecond, that which is called by him ONE-MANY; and the third, that which is by him expreſſed ONE AND MANY." Plotinus then adds: και συμφωνος ȣτος και ἀυτος ἐςι ταις

* Cudworth's Intellectual Syſtem, vol. i. p. 384.

ταις τϱισιν, " so that he himself also (Parmenides) agreed in the acknowledgement of a TRIAD of archical hypostases."* The probable meaning of Parmenides in these distinctions is commented upon at length by Cudworth, to whom I must refer the reader for more particular information, while I finally pass on to the consideration of the ideas upon this subject of some others of the more distinguished philosophers of Greece.

One of the most express and clear of the ancient philosophers on this subject was Numenius, a Pythagorean, who flourished in the second century, and who, if Eusebius rightly represents his sentiments, wrote concerning Three Sovereign Deities. He makes the Second the Son of the First, and, by a coarse, but decisive, figure of speech, calls the Third Hypostasis, Απογονος, *Grandson.*†

The Trinity of Plotinus very remarkably resembled Plato's, and consisted of το Ἑν, the One; Νȣς, the Mind; and Ψυχη, the Soul; and these he denominates τϱεις αϱχικας ὑποστασεις, three archical or principal hypostases. The Trinity of Amelius, his contemporary, we have

* Plotini, Ennead. 5. lib. i. cap. 8.

† Vide Eusebius Præp. Evang. lib. ii. p. 537, and Proclus in Timæo, lib. ii. p. 93.

have clearly ſeen in a former page, was a plain Trinity of perſons; for, he ſtyled them τρεις βασιλεις, three kings, and makes them all δημιεργυς, creators.* Porphyry called the firſt hypoſtaſis in his Trinity, in ſingular conformity to the notion of Chriſtians, τον Πατερα, the Father; his ſecond was Νυς, the Mind, like Plato's; but his third hypoſtaſis differed from Plato's and all that went before him; for, he denominated it not the Soul of the World, but a Soul ὑπερκοσμιος, above that of the world.†

There was an attempt made by Jamblichus, Proclus, and ſome of the later Platoniſts, to invalidate this venerable doctrine of Chriſtianity, by multiplying the number of the divine hypoſtaſes, and by exalting the το 'Αγαθον to an eminence far above the other two. Of this effort I ſhall only obſerve, that it proved as futile as it was malignant; and, having now, through a ſeries of ages, and a variety of countries, many of them very remote from each other, examined the hiſtory of both the Chriſtian and Pagan Trinities, and ſhewn the extent of this doctrine over all the Oriental world, I ſhall cloſe the prolonged digreſſion with

* Proclus, cited before in Timæo, p. 93.

† Proclus in Tim. p. 94 and 98.

with a few reflections that naturally refult from the furvey.

The firft that forcibly ftrikes the mind is, that this doctrine could not be the invention of Plato, becaufe it has been plainly proved, by accumulated evidence, to have exifted in the Higher Afia, and particularly in India, a thoufand years before Plato flourifhed; for, of that remote date are the Elephanta caverns, and the Indian hiftory of the Mahabbarat, in which a plain Triad of Deity is alluded to and defignated.

Of confequence, ftill more palpably falfe muft be the affertion, that Juftin Martyr, who had formerly been a Platonift, firft imported it into the Chriftian church, from the writings of that philofopher, in the fecond century. We have feen that, in fact, this doctrine, long before Plato flourifhed, was admitted, but concealed, among the myftic cabbala of the rabbies; and, as undoubtedly one of the ftrongeft, if not the *ftrongeft*, of the arguments, adduced in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity being known and acknowledged by the ancient rabbies, is that deduced from the evident appearance of it in the Chaldee paraphrafes, compofed before the violent difputes on the fubject broke forth, I have felected many

ftriking

ſtriking paſſages from them, which, I imagine, cannot fail to have their due weight. I ſhall not, therefore, here enlarge farther on that head, but only inſert a remark omitted before, that the famous and frequently-cited paſſage in the Pſalms, the *Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, is tranſlated in the Targum, *the Lord ſaid unto his* WORD; which, if not underſtood of the ſecond hypoſtaſis, is inexplicable nonſenſe, and can be reſolved by no idiom whatever.

It is a circumſtance not leſs aſtoniſhing than true, that the Jews ſhould admit the miracles, while they deny the divinity, of Chriſt; for, the reader has been already informed, that, unable otherwiſe to account for the power which he exerted in working thoſe miracles, the reality of which they dare not deny, they are driven to the extremity of aſſerting that thoſe miracles were wrought by means of the TETRAGRAMMATON, which he ſtole out of the Holy of Holies. Now their not denying his miracles is one great and decided proof of their having been really and publicly performed, and conſequently of his being the Meſſiah. Inſtead of that belief, however, to which impartial truth ſhould lead them, they obſtinately continue to call the crucified Jeſus the wicked Balaam, the prophetic impoſtor,

who

who ſtole the TETRAGRAMMATON, and to whom they impute all the ſufferings of their nation, becauſe, as Abarbanel has it, "That deceiver impiouſly called himſelf the *Son of God.*"* Hence inflamed with intolerable hatred againſt Chriſtians, they remain almoſt totally ignorant of the leading principles of the Chriſtian religion and the foundations on which it reſts. And thus long are they likely to remain, while they continue to entertain the incongruous, the ſenſual, the abſurd, conceptions, which, at this day, prevail among them, relative to the imaginary being whom they have adorned with the enſigns and authority of the *true Meſſiah.*

There was an ancient and almoſt immemorial tradition among the Jews that the world was to laſt only ſix thouſand years. They divided the ages, during which it was to continue, in the following manner. Two thouſand years were to elapſe before the law took place; two thouſand were to be paſſed under the law; and two thouſand under the Meſſiah. Indeed, this ſexmillennial duration of the world was, it is probable, too much the belief of the ancient fathers, who conceived, that, as the creation was formed in ſix days, reckoning

* See Baſnage, p. 254.

reckoning according to that aſſertion in the Pſalms, that every day is with God as a thouſand years, and was concluded by a grand ſabbath or day of almighty reſt, ſo the world was ordained to laſt only during the revolution of ſix thouſand years.

Time rolled on in its rapid and reſiſtleſs career, and proved to them the fallacy of this ancient tradition. Still, however, their moſt celebrated rabbins continued calculating, by the courſe of the ſtars, the times of their great Meſſiah's expected advent. Repeated calculations of thoſe times, and as repeated diſappointments, have, at length, nearly plunged in deſpair the infatuated ſons of Judah. Rabbi Abraham, who, in the year 1516, had found, engraved upon a wall, a very ancient prophecy, relative to that coming, had declared that the ſame ſtar which appeared when Joſhua conquered the land of Canaan, and when Ezra brought back the people from Babylon, would again appear in the year 1529, when the Meſſiah might, for a certainty, be expected: but the prediction was by no means verified by the event, and the more recent Talmudic doctors, ſtung by this painful expoſure of their credit, pray to God that the man who now preſumes to calculate the times

of the Meſſiah may burſt aſunder, and that his bones may ſwell and break. Such is their ſtrong language in the Gemara. His coming, they aſſert, is ſtill delayed on account of the unrepented ſins of the people. When this conſtellation ſhall at length manifeſt itſelf, the moſt awful prodigies in nature are to precede his deſcent. The moſt ſanguinary wars ſhall deſolate the globe; a dew of blood ſhall fall down from heaven; plague and famine ſhall ravage the earth; and the moſt venomous reptiles and the moſt ſavage monſters of the deſert are to be let looſe on mankind. The ſun itſelf ſhall be turned into darkneſs and the moon into blood, according to Joel's prophecy; but, in thirty days, ſhall recover their priſtine brightneſs. "Men," ſays the Gemara, "formidable with two heads and numerous eyes, burning like fire, ſhall come from the extremities of the earth; and a powerful and deſpotic monarch finally prevailing ſhall govern the univerſe with a rod of iron."* His throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in Rome, (a proof *at what period* they expected the Meſſiah,) but he ſhall reign only nine months, when the firſt Meſſiah, *the ſon of Joſeph,* as he is called in the Talmud, ſhall appear; and, routing this

* Gemara, Title Sanhedrim, fol. 52.

this tyrant with great ſlaughter, ſhall eſtabliſh a more righteous throne. This throne, though more righteous, is however to be ſcarcely leſs ſanguinary; for, in one battle, nearly two hundred thouſand combatants with their leader are to periſh. At length the great arch-angel Michael is to blow three times the trumpet of heaven: and then *the deſire of nations*, the true Meſſiah, the Son of David, is to appear with the prophet Elijah by his ſide. All the Chriſtians and infidels then living are to be annihilated at the ſecond blaſt of that trumpet. All the virtuous deceaſed of the Jews, from the time of Moſes, are to riſe from their graves, and attend the Meſſiah to the renovated Jeruſalem, which, with its temple, is to be rebuilt with precious ſtones. A banquet of boundleſs magnificence is to be prepared for them, which is to be adorned with a Leviathan fatted of old for this feaſt of the bleſſed; with a female Behemoth, of exquiſite flavour; and with the bird BARIUCHNE, a bird of ſuch ſtupendous magnitude, that, when its wings are expanded, the orb of the ſun is darkened. Wine, treaſured up ever ſince the creation, in the vault of Adam, is to flow in abundant ſtreams; wine, of the rich vintage that commenced before the

the earth became defiled and curfed; wine, the flavour and fpirit of which is not to be decayed, but improved, by its immenfe age. Such are the conceptions, reader, and others a thoufand times more grofs, of the Jewifh nation relative to the grand banquet to take place on the Meffiah's appearance. Bafnage profeffes faithfully to have detailed thefe various circumftances from Maimonides, Abarbanel, and other celebrated rabbies, and from him I have copied the luxurious picture, to mark the corruption of their minds, and their carnal notions of thofe future pleafures which Chriftians believe to be purely fpiritual.* Can we wonder, after this, at any mutilation or depravation of paffages in Scripture by a race fo fenfual and fo corrupt?

To refume the gravity which fo folemn a fubject requires, I muft beg permiffion again to obferve, that, on thefe myfterious points, which human reafon cannot fathom, it is in vain that we make that reafon the umpire. That finite man, however, can form no adequate conception of this great truth, by no means implies impoffibility or contradiction in the thing itfelf. This circumftance arifes from the limited nature of the human faculties.

* Bafnage's Hiftory of the Jews, p. 373.

culties. It is mere ignorance; but it is an ignorance which we can never overcome. Let it ever be remembered, that Chriſtianity by no means propoſes to mankind a theological code, encumbered with no difficulties, involved in no perplexities. Its great myſterious truths are not to be ſolved by the light of nature, nor ſcanned by the boldeſt flight of human intellect. Neither the Trinity nor the Incarnation can be proved, nor were intended to be proved, by philoſophical arguments. The word of God is the ſole baſis of the proofs and ſolutions of theſe ſtupendous doctrines. They are wiſely ſhaded from our view, the better to excite in us the ardour of faith, and exerciſe the virtues neceſſary to obtain the ſublime rewards which it propoſes to perſevering piety. The Almighty has been pleaſed to erect mounds and ramparts, as of old at Sinai, around the abode of his Majeſty, to ward off the dangerous curioſity of man; he hath wrapped himſelf in clouds, that we might not be conſumed by the full blaze of that glory which inveſts the eternal throne.

HINDOOS in various attitudes of PE… CE *under the great* BANIAN TREE *of* INDIA

A DISSERTATION

ON THE

PENANCES, SACRIFICES,

AND OTHER PECULIAR SUPERSTITIOUS PRACTICES,

OF THE HINDOOS.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. THE TANJORE

CHAPTER I.

The Author takes a general retrospective Survey of the various Subjects previously discussed in the INDIAN ANTIQUITIES; *and apologizes for the Desultoriness unavoidable in so vast a Field of Inquiry.—The theological System of the Brahmins, in many Respects, contradictory.—The necessary Result of the different Characters of their two principal Deities,* VEESHNU *and* SEEVA.—*Their respective Symbols, Rites, and Worship, described.—The Subject historically investigated, and the varying Modes of Adoration paid them accounted for, by a Reference to the two great Sources whence they were probably derived, the benevolent Sons of* SHEM *and the gloomy Progeny of* CUSH.

HAVING now considered the Theology of India, under the general divisions into which that comprehensive system naturally branches itself forth; having, in the first place, investigated the nature of the mystic rites, celebrated by this superstitious race in consecrated groves and caverns; their devo-

tion, in every age, to the Sabian ſuperſtition, and veneration immemorially paid by them to the mundane elements, but principally to the all-pervading fire; having conſidered that religion, in a phyſical, mythological, and moral, view, as well as in what points it reſembled, or appeared to be connected with, the Egyptian, Perſian, Grecian, and, finally, with our own more elevated ſyſtem of theology; I muſt now deſcend from more general obſervation to notice a few particulars by which it is diſtinguiſhed from every other eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment in the known world. A peculiar form of veſtment, and an appropriated mode of ſhaving the hair of the head and beard, have diſtinguiſhed moſt religious ſects; but where in ancient hiſtory do we find a race ſo infatuated as to ſuſpend themſelves aloft in cages upon trees conſidered ſacred, that they might not be infected by *touching the polluted earth*, refuſing all ſuſtenance, but ſuch as may keep the pulſe of life juſt beating; or hanging aloft upon tenter-hooks, and voluntarily bearing inexpreſſible agonies; ſometimes thruſting themſelves by hundreds under the wheels of immenſe machines that carry about their unconſcious gods, where they are inſtantly cruſhed to atoms; and, at other

times,

times, hurling themſelves from precipices of ſtupendous height; now ſtanding up to their necks in rivers, till rapacious alligators come and devour them; now burying themſelves in ſnow till frozen to death; meaſuring with their naked bodies, trailed over burning ſands, the ground lying between one pagoda and another, diſtant perhaps many leagues; or braving, with fixed eyes, the ardor of a meridian ſun between the tropics; and all this in the tranſporting hope of immediately tranſmigrating into paradiſe? Where do we ſee an otherwiſe-poliſhed nation ſtaining their faces according to their different religious caſts, and, as I am inclined to believe, according to the imagined colour of the planets, with long ſtrokes of ſaffron and vermilion; although ſprung from one common head, yet divided into innumerable caſts, each ſeparated from the other by an eternal barrier; and all uniting to ſhun, as death, the contaminating intercourſe of ſtrangers? To detail theſe and many other curious particulars, relative to the Brahmin and Yogee penitents, will be the buſineſs of this laſt and concluding portion of the Indian Theology.

When, in the preceding Diſſertation, I contended that the Indian Triad of Deity was

(what I firmly believe that Triad to be) *the corruption of a nobler doctrine*, and when I combated the idea of Seeva being the DESTROYING POWER, on the ground that their fyftem of philofophical theology allows not of the deftruction of any object in nature, I by no means intended to convey an idea that the Indians are not impreffed with the moft awful conceptions of God the Avenger. The dreadful catalogue of penances, enumerated above, and voluntarily endured to avert that vengeance, inconteftably proves the exiftence of thofe conceptions in their minds; and the religious rites at prefent in practice among them, demonftrate that they confider Seeva as the delegated minifter of the Almighty vengeance. On the fubject of thefe and other *apparent* contradictions in the courfe of this work, I beg permiffion to offer one general, and not, I truft, inadequate, apology.

On a fubject fo extenfive and fo complex as the ANCIENT RELIGION OF INDIA, a religion fo involved in the fables of mythology, fo darkened by the deepeft fhades of fuperftition, and in the inveftigation of which, fuch an ample fcope muft neceffarily be allowed to opinion and conjecture, an exact arrangement of

of the various matter conftantly rifing for inveftigation could not always be preferved, nor unimpeachable accuracy of delineation be always expected. If, however, I have, in one page, reprefented the Indian religion as mild and benevolent, and, in another, as fanguinary and terrible, the inconfiftency is not to be imputed to me, but to that religion itfelf, which has, in different ages, and under varying circumftances, altered her feature, her voice, and her gefture. Upon this account it is, that fhe prefents to the inquirer a two-fold, or rather multi-fold, afpect; bearing alternately the fmile of beauty and complacency, and the frown of horror and deformity. At one time arrayed in all the giant terrors of fuperftition, fhe appears, like a fable and vindictive DÆMON from NARAKA, to ftalk in defolating fury over the continent of India, brandifhing an uplifted fcourge, and clanking an iron chain; while, after her, are borne a band of famifhed YOGEES ftretched on the wheels of torture, and languifhing in various attitudes of penance. Her tone is high and menacing, her footfteps are marked with blood, and her edicts are ftamped with the characters of death. At another time, fhe wears the fimilitude of a beautiful and radiant

CHERUB

CHERUB from HEAVEN, bearing on her perſuaſive lips the accents of pardon and peace, and on her ſilken wings benefaction and bleſſing. Now, reſerved and ſtately, ſhe delights in pompous ſacrifices and ſplendid oblations: ſhe exults to ſee her altars decorated with brocade, and her images glittering with jewels; a numerous train of prieſts, gorgeouſly arrayed, officiating in her temples, and wafting around, from golden cenſers, the richeſt odours of the Eaſt. Again ſhe aſſumes a ruſtic garb, and arrays her aſpect in feſtive ſmiles: ſhe mingles in the jocund train of dancing girls that ſurround her altar, and will accept none but the ſimpleſt oblations; fruits, flowers, and honey. This difference of religious feature is of a nature conſonant with the diviſion of the HINDOOS, noticed before, into two grand ſects; that of VEESHNU, and that of SEEVA; and it may in part be accounted for by the different character of the patron-deities; the one, a mild and *preſerving*, the other, to adopt the language and ſentiments of the Brahmins, a fierce, vindictive, and *deſtroying*, deity!

But whence originally aroſe this aſtoniſhing contrariety of ſentiment, this diametrical oppoſition of character, as wide aſunder as earth

earth from heaven, between the two great ſects of India? Whence came that diviſion itſelf, if, in reality, the Indians derived their deſcent from ONE COMMON ANCESTOR, and are univerſally bound by the laws of ONE GREAT LEGISLATOR? We have from the authentic, the incontrovertible, evidence of Mr. Orme, in one page, delineated the gentle Hindoo ſhuddering at the ſight of blood,* and, upon that account, though ſkilled in all other branches of the medical ſcience, totally ignorant of anatomical diſſection; and we have, in another, from the equally incontrovertible evidence of Sir William Jones and Mr. Wilkins, independently of ancient claſſical authority, repreſented them as *profuſely ſhedding* the blood of *men*, *bulls*, and *horſes*, in ſacrifice. Nay, even at this day, certain tribes of the ferocious race of Mahrattas are more than ſuſpected of ſecretly cheriſhing a number of human victims, the moſt remarkable for perſonal beauty that can poſſibly be obtained, and generally in the full vigour and bloom of youth, for the rites of the ALTAR; of fattening them like the ſtall-fed oxen for ſlaughter; and, on grand ſolemnities of feſtivity or grief, of actually offering up thoſe unhappy

* See vol. ii. chap. 1.

unhappy victims to their gloomy goddeſs in all the pomp of that tremendous ſacrifice.*

With diffidence natural to an author of uneſtabliſhed character, who feels himſelf advancing upon dangerous and diſputable ground, and yet engaged in the diſcuſſion of a variety of topics, equally important and intereſting, I have hitherto refrained from diſcloſing to the reader my real ſentiments on ſo abſtruſe a ſubject, and from unfolding a ſyſtem, of which the novelty might ſubject me to the charge of preſumption, and the precariouſneſs of it to the cenſures of critical ſeverity. At the hazard of being at once accounted inconſiſtent in my aſſertion, and incompetent to the diſcharge of that high hiſtoric function which I have, perhaps, too raſhly adventured upon, throughout this Diſſertation, I have endeavoured, in various ways, and by ſuppoſitions, none of which, I am convinced, could appear by any means abſo-

lutely

* An intelligent gentleman, who reſided ſome years in India, related this circumſtance to me, and told me, I might depend upon it for a FACT. Another gentleman, who filled a reſpectable civil office in one of our ſettlements, writes me word, that one morning, while he was attending the duties of his ſtation, a decapitated child was diſcovered at the door of a celebrated pagoda. On inquiry, it was found to be a ſacrifice to avert ſome dreaded evil, and the father was the executioner.

lutely ſatisfactory or concluſive to a ſenſible reflecting mind, to account for the numerous contradictions pointed out, as well in the VEDAS themſelves as in the principles and practices of the BRAHMINS, and intended to reſerve the final attempt to reſolve the difficulty, till I ſhould have reached that period of the early Hindoo hiſtory, when I knew an opportunity would offer for a complete developement of the plan, which I own, to myſelf, has ever appeared both plauſible and defenſible. My reaſons for adopting it will be given at large in their proper place; and it is for the ſake of perſpicuity alone, during the remaining, and otherwiſe inexplicable, pages of the theological Diſſertation, that I ſhall in this chapter briefly ſubmit the outlines to the candid conſideration of my readers.

It is, however, previouſly neceſſary that we ſhould enter and more minutely explore the internal regions and decorations of thoſe temples, an account of the external conſtruction of which engroſſed former portions of the Brahmin theology. The Indians having broken their grand Triad into three ſeparate deities, it remains that we conſider the worſhip paid, at the preſent day, to each; their peculiar rites, the ſacred utenſils made uſe of,

and

and the different oblations performed, in their refpective temples. Thus will this curious fubject, fo far as it is yet known, be fully before the reader, and this final portion of it conclude to his entire fatisfaction, when he is affured that nothing important, on a topic fo interefting, has been omitted. Before it clofes, however, an aftonifhing and ftupendous fcene will be unveiled to his view, fuch as no country befide ever witneffed, and no religion ever yet difplayed to the contemplation of the philofopher.

In a former volume we left an innumerable multitude affembled, at fun-rife, before the door of a great pagoda, who, after having bathed in the tank of ablution below, and left their fandals on its margin, impatiently awaited the unfolding of thofe doors by the miniftering Brahmins. Before they can enter, however, another indifpenfable ceremony takes place, which can only be performed by the hand of a Brahmin, and that is, the impreffing of their foreheads with THE TILUK, or mark of different colours, as they may belong either to the fect of Veefhnu or Seeva. If the temple be that of Veefhnu, their foreheads are marked with a longitudinal line, and the colour ufed is vermilion; if it be the

temple

temple of Seeva, they are marked with a parallel line, and the colour uſed is turmeric, or ſaffron. But theſe two grand ſects being again ſubdivided into numerous claſſes, both the ſize and the ſhape of the TILUK are varied in proportion to their ſuperior or inferior rank. In regard to the TILUK, I muſt obſerve, that it was a cuſtom of very ancient date in Aſia to mark their ſervants in the forehead. It is alluded to in Ezekiel, ix. 4: where the Almighty commands his angel *to go through the city, and* SET A MARK ON THE FOREHEADS *of the men*, (his ſervants, the faithful,) *who ſighed for the abominations committed in the midſt thereof*.* The ſame idea again occurs in the Revelations, vii. 31. *Hurt not the earth, neither the ſea, nor the trees, till we have ſealed the* SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS. With reſpect to the colour with which the Hindoos are marked, I cannot but conſider this rite as a remnant of the old Sabian ſuperſtition, in which, the reader has been informed, the Chaldæan devotees painted their idols according to the colour of the planet or ſtar adored: and it ſeems to be no more than right that the ſervant of the deity ſhould bear the ſame mark and be diſtinguiſhed

* Conſult Lowth and other commentators on this curious text.

guiſhed by the ſame colour with which that deity was deſignated. In fact, all the idols of the Indian pagodas are at this day gaudily painted; and that paint is renovated by the prieſt, whenſoever he renews his devotion; for, ſpeaking of the private pooja, or worſhip of the Indians in their houſes, Mr. Crauford informs us, that the Brahmin who performs the ceremony, occaſionally ringing the bell and blowing the ſhell, " gives the TILUK, or mark on the forehead, to the idol, by dipping his right thumb in a mixture prepared for the purpoſe."* Indeed, Hamilton, giving us an account of the great ſtone idol of Jaggernaut, after ſaying he had two rich diamonds near the top to repreſent eyes, adds, that his noſe and mouth were painted with vermilion; a proof that the Jaggernaut pagoda was erected to Veeſhnu. I have no doubt, that, originally, this mark was the mark of the hermetic croſs, that celebrated ſymbol in all the Gentile world; and, for reaſons which will hereafter be unfolded, I am induced to agree with Lowth, that the paſſage, above-cited from Ezekiel, originally ſtood in the Septuagint, not *το σημειον, a mark*; but *Ταυ σημειον*, THE MARK TAU, or great T. Let us now enter

* Sketches, vol. i. p. 231.

enter the pagoda with the devout and purified Hindoo, and ſee him pay his obeiſance to the Deity through the ſymbols that repreſent him.

Involved in darkneſs, ſcarcely leſs than the ſubterraneous caverns before-deſcribed, from having only one low door for the entrance, and filled with the moſt diſguſting effluvia, ariſing from the ſtench of lamps kept continually burning, and the oil uſed in the ſacrifices, the Indian pagoda exhibits, on the firſt entrance, the appearance of a polluted dungeon, whoſe walls are covered with animals, monſtrous in ſhape and terrible in aſpect. Theſe, it was before obſerved, are ſymbolical repreſentations of the attributes of the Deity; his WISDOM being repreſented by a circle of heads; his STRENGTH, by the elephant; his GLORY, by horns, imitative of the ſolar ray; his CREATIVE POWER, by the male of animals of a prolific kind, as the bull or goat; his BENEVOLENCE, by the ſacred cow, whoſe milk nouriſhes the gentle Hindoo; while the combination of theſe animals or parts of animals was intended to deſignate his united wiſdom, power, glory, and benevolence. Degrading, I obſerved, to the divine nature as theſe repreſentations appear to be, and as they really

 are,

are, they are only ſuch as might be expected from a race ſo deeply involved in phyſical reſearches as the Indian nation is known immemorially to have been; whoſe Brahmins, while they acknowledge the Supreme Deity to have occaſionally deſcended from heaven, and inveſted himſelf with a human, and even a beſtial, form, have themſelves opened a wide field for the allegorical deſigns which decorate their pagodas.

But, independently of theſe animal-figures, the ſymbols of the divine attributes, all the three great deities of India having wives, as, for inſtance, Brahma being married to Seraſwati, Veeſhnu to Lacſhmi, and Seeva to Bhavani; and theſe wives, reſpectively producing a numerous offspring; is the occaſion of their temples being filled with a thouſand ſubordinate divinities, whoſe names and functions it would be an endleſs labour to repeat. The hiſtory of many of theſe mythological perſonages may be found in Sir William Jones's Diſſertation in the Aſiatic Reſearches on the gods of Greece, Italy, and India; and in the publication of M. Sonnerat. I ſhall ſtill adhere to the great outlines only of the Hindoo faith, and principally confine myſelf to an account of the rites paid to the great Triad

collectively

collectively or separately. It is a circumstance equally curious as true, that there at this day exists throughout Hindostan scarcely any one temple sacred to Brahma, in his individual character of Creator; nor, though in honour of Veeshnu and Seeva numerous festivals crowd the Hindoo almanac, is one day peculiarly consecrated to Brahma. The Brahmins alone, in memorial of their original descent from Brahma, every morning, at sunrise, perform to his honour the ceremony of Sandivane, or ablution in the Ganges, or some sacred tank. In all other respects, his functions and worship seem to be absorbed in that of Veeshnu, in whose temples he is sculptured with four heads and four arms. The four heads, as often before explained, are symbols of the four elements and four quarters of the world. Some authors assert, they are allusive to the four VEDAS; but that is impossible, since, originally, there were but three of those sacred books. In one of the four hands, Brahma holds a CIRCLE, the mystic emblem of eternity; in another, FIRE, the just emblem of power pervading to the centre of that world which he made. With the two others he writes on OLLES, or Indian palm-leaves, possibly in token of his having given

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the Hindoos the grand code of their theology, as Menu, who by Sonnerat is too often confounded with this perſonage, imparted to them the code of their laws. I ſhall not inſult the reader's underſtanding with a ridiculous tale, told by M. Sonnerat, concerning the reaſon of this general neglect and degradation of Brahma, the ſupreme Creator.* With theſe mythologic details let the prieſts of India amuſe their deluded followers. Such, however, being the fact, let us endeavour to explain the myſtery in the beſt manner we can, and I humbly propoſe the following query for the ſolution of it: Do not the Hindoos mean to intimate, that, the great work of creation being completed, and every thing ſet in order and motion by the Almighty CREATIVE FIAT, the regulation and management of the world thus formed naturally devolved upon the PRESERVER?

The pagodas, conſecrated either to the one or the other of theſe latter deities, are invariably adorned with two ſtatues of the god, one without the temple, to which the people themſelves preſent their offerings; the other, more

* See Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 51, in which Brahma is degraded into a pedeſtal to ſupport his fellow-deities, Veeſhnu and Seeva.

more ſacred and richly arrayed with cloth of gold and jewels, tenants the inmoſt ſanctuary, and can only be approached by the officiating Brahmin. Theſe images are generally made of ſtone or copper, painted and gilt; ſome are of ſolid gold, but few or none of ſilver. They had, formerly, for eyes, rich gems, rubies, or emeralds, but Mohammedan and European avarice united have obſcured thoſe more brilliant luminaries, and glaſs ones have been ſubſtituted in their place. Tavernier tells a curious ſtory of a certain goldſmith; who, ſecreting himſelf in the great pagoda of Jaggernaut, robbed the idol of one of his envied eyes. The ſtory is exceedingly doubtful. However the thief was not permitted by indignant Veeſhnu long to enjoy a treaſure obtained by ſuch tremendous ſacrilege; for, when the Brahmin opened the door the enſuing morning, and he attempted to go out of the pagoda, he was ſtruck with death at the very threſhold, when the ſtolen jewel was found upon him. Tavernier adds, that no goldſmith, nor can we wonder at it, was ever after ſuffered to enter that holy pagoda.*

Veeſhnu is variouſly repreſented in his temples according to the different characters

* Indian Travels, book iii. chap. ix. London, folio edit.

aſſumed by him in his Avatars or deſcents, but more generally by a human form with four arms. In one of his hands he bears a certain ſhell, or CHANQUE, as they denominate it on the Coromandel coaſt. It is the holy ſhell uſed in the rites of public worſhip, and its nine valves or foldings allude to his nine incarnations. Another bears the radiant CHACRA, deſcribed before, as inſtinct with life. A third graſps, ſometimes a drawn ſword, like that engraved in the plate of the Matſya Avatar, and ſometimes a mace, or ſceptre, broad and ponderous at the extremity, but tapering where the hand holds it. The fourth is unoccupied, and ready to aſſiſt thoſe who call for the aſſiſtance of the heavenly *preſerver*. Near him is conſtantly portrayed his GAROORI, or ſwift-winged bird, on which, in theſe benevolent expeditions, he is wafted through the air.* According to M. Sonnerat, it is the eagle of Pondicherry, or the briſſon; he deſcribes its head and neck as white, and the reſt of the body as of a duſky red colour. Theſe birds are conſidered by the Brahmins as ſacred, and are fed by them at ſtated periods, when the prieſts of Veeſhnu ſummon them to their repaſt by the ſound of two plates of copper

* Voyages, vol. i. p. 39.

copper ſtruck againſt each other. There can ſcarcely be a doubt, as before-intimated, that Veeſhnu, with his chacra and garoori, gave to the mythologiſts of Greece their Jupiter Tonans and his thunder-bearing eagle; whom, during the early commercial intercourſe that ſubſiſted between them, they might have ſeen thus deſignated in the Indian temples. I defer any particular account of the nine incarnations of Veeſhnu, till the ancient hiſtory of India ſhall commence, of which they form a very large and intereſting portion. It is ſufficient in this place to obſerve, that thoſe incarnations — it is with reluctance I uſe the word, but there is no other that can convey my meaning, and it is uſed by Sir William Jones, and many other writers, who retain for the Chriſtian doctrines the profoundeſt veneration — repreſent the Deity, deſcending in a human ſhape, either to accompliſh certain awful and important events, as, in the inſtance of the three firſt: to confound blaſpheming vice, to ſubvert gigantic tyranny, and to avenge oppreſſed innocence, as in the five following: or, finally, as in the ninth, to eſtabliſh a glorious ſyſtem of benevolent inſtitutions upon the ruins of a gloomy and ſanguinary ſuperſtition. Theſe, ſurely, are noble

actions; these are worthy of a god; and it is principally to these different descents of Veeshnu, and for such illustrious purposes, that all the allegorical sculpture and paintings of India have reference. The religion, therefore, of the Veeshnu sect is, as already has been observed, of a cheerful and social nature; their's is the festive song, the sprightly dance, and the resounding cymbal: libations of milk and honey flow upon his altars; the gayest garlands decorate his statues; aromatic woods eternally burn before him; and the richest gums of the East disperse fragrance through the temples of THE PRESERVER.

Diametrically opposite to all this is the sombrous superstition of the relentless Seeva; a superstition darkened by gloomy terrors and ensanguined by excruciating penances. Seeva, however, is differently represented, according as the temple is consecrated to him in his avenging or in his re-productive capacity. I shall for the present consider him in the former character, in which he is portrayed with a fierce and menacing aspect; his features are distorted, and his tongue is protruded from his mouth. He bears in his hand a trident, by whose three tines is symbolized FIRE, that destroys all things.

On

On this ſubject I cannot forbear remarking, that it appears to me, in the courſe of theſe inquiries, that a ſpecies of ſuperſtition, very diſſimilar in feature from that which prevailed on the ſhores of the peninſula of India, ſeems very early to have flouriſhed in the remote and lofty regions of Upper Hindoſtan. It was a religion that delighted not in the ſprightly notes of the tabor, nor was ſoothed with the melodious warbling of the dancing ſyrens of the pagoda. It was a religion of gloom and melancholy, that loved to act its unſocial rites in the ſolemn receſſes of the deep foreſt, under the covert of the night, and by the pale light of Chandra, the conſcious moon, that bore witneſs to the nocturnal orgies of the ſequeſtered and penitentiary Saivites. Indeed it can by no means be an object of wonder to any reader of reflection, who has travelled through the entertaining volume of Bernier to the ſecluded valley of Caſhmire, a valley ſurrounded with mountains, the moſt ſtupendous in height and the moſt rugged in form, from whoſe lofty ſteeps a thouſand cataracts on every ſide ruſh down into the peaceful boſom of that valley, that the mind of the Hindoo, intimidated by the grand and majeſtic objects with which he is encircled,

ſhould

ſhould be the ſport of ſuperſtitious terrors. The whole range of mountains, in moſt places, covered with eternal ſnow, that ſkirt Hindoſtan to the north, and riſe one above the other in a ſtyle of horrid grandeur; and the vaſt and dreary deſerts of Sirinagur, through the long extent of which the Ganges winds in its paſſage to Lower India; the impenetrable foreſts that in ſome places clothe thoſe mountains, deepening the ſhadow thrown by them into the ſubjacent plains, and the ſteep abrupt denuded rocks that have braved the fury of every ſtorm ſince the deluge; all together form a contraſt, at which human nature may well ſhudder, and by which human fortitude may be well ſtaggered. Theſe regions were a proper reſidence for the auſtere ſect of the Saivites: men, accuſtomed to ſuch gloomy objects, view religion and every other object through a falſe medium; the Deity is inveſted with the darkneſs which enwraps his works; they ſee him only in his dreadful attributes, they perpetually hear his awful voice in the thunder, and contemplate him only in the ſtorm that howls above them. They haſten, therefore, to propitiate him by unexampled ſeverities, and they deluge his altars with ſacrificial blood.

The

The inveſtigation of this very curious, though unpleaſing, ſubject, which I am about to conſider, the detail of theſe penitentiary ſufferings and voluntary ſacrifices, inſtituted by timid ſuperſtition in the earlieſt ages of the world, opens a ſcene at once novel and intereſting. So deep, however, in the abyſs of time runs back the period to which I allude, ſo thick a veil hath oblivion diffuſed over the events of that diſtant æra, that, at the preſent moment, I can ſcarcely collect any poſitive or connected intelligence relative to the nature of thoſe myſterious orgies, or the exact place of their celebration. It is evident, however, from the Ayeen Akbery, and the Hiſtory of Feriſhtah, that both *ſerpents* (that moſt ancient ſymbol of the Deity in Egypt, to whoſe body, in their myſterious hieroglyphics, they added the head of the ſharp-ſighted hawk, to denote his all-obſerving vigilance in the government of the world) and *ſacred fountains* were immemorially holden throughout Caſhmire in the profoundeſt veneration. In a paſſage, cited before, it has been evinced, that in no leſs than 700 places of that province ſculptured figures of ſerpents were worſhipped; and that, at KEHROW, in the ſame province, 360 fountains, the number of the

the days of the ancient year, before it was reformed by more accurate calculations, were ſacred to the MOON. As the moon is thus particularly mentioned, under the ſerpentine figure they probably adored the SUN; but ſince we read, in the ſame page of the Ayeen Akbery, that few venomous reptiles are to be found in the Subah, it is evident that they muſt have derived the ſuperſtition from ſome other country.* I am not, however, inclined to deduce it from any connection with Egypt, ſince the whole of this Diſſertation tends to give the palm of originality to India rather than to Egypt, but from that country where the orbs of heaven, and the great ſerpent OB, or Python, were firſt venerated;† and where, according to Stanley on the Chaldaic philoſophy, the whole ſyſtem, both of morals and phyſics, was explained by perpetual alluſions to *fountains*, imaginary or material, whoſe ſtreams, like thoſe of the Hebrew Sephiroth, were repreſented flowing into one another, and from whoſe mingled influences reſults the harmony both of the immaterial and material world.

Caſhmire,

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 154.

† See Stanley, upon the Chaldaic philoſophy.

Cafhmire, which has been often called the terreftrial paradife, may indeed be juftly denominated the *holy land of fuperftition*. In the Ayeen Akbery, forty-five places are ftated to be dedicated to MAHADEO, fixty-four to VEESHNU, twenty-two to DURGA, and only three to BRAHMA. Many idolatrous temples alfo of brick or ftone are faid to be in Cafhmire, of ftupendous magnitude, and of unfathomable antiquity; fome of them yet perfect, but many in ruins. Speaking of one of thefe near Bereng, the Perfian hiftorian fays, "In the centre of the refervoir is an idol-temple of ftone, a beautiful fabric. At this place, the devotees furround themfelves with fire till they are reduced to afhes, imagining they are, by this act, pleafing the Deity."* In the fame book, the cataract of Wiffy is particularized, which falls from the enormous altitude of 200 ells, with a noife that infpires awe and aftonifhment, and down which the devout Hindoos frequently precipitate themfelves, thinking, again obferves Abul Fazil, that, by thus ending their lives, they enfure to themfelves reward in another life. Thus again are we led back by infenfible degrees to the Metempfychofis, which, in fact, may be confidered

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 158.

confidered as the leading principle in the religion of India; a principle that at once fires the hopes of the virtuous, and alarms, with unutterable terrors, the fouls of the guilty.

To the powerful influence over the mind of accidental fituations, dreary and romantic as thofe above-defcribed, prefenting to view the moft awful, and even terrifying, profpects in nature, much may be afcribed; and it is not to be wondered at, if, amidft fuch fcenes, a religion of gloom and melancholy fhould be engendered and cherifhed. Since, however, the fame fevere rites are practifed (though lefs extenfively, and generally) in regions of Hindoftan, very remote from the foreft of Gandharvas in the fnowy mountains of Heemacot, or Imaus, on plains when the fun for ever fhines, and all nature looks fmiling and gay, we muft penetrate to a deeper fource for the origin of this amazing difference between the feftive rites of Veefhnu and the fombrous and blood-ftained orgies of Seeva; we muft explore the page of facred hiftory, and endeavour to trace out fome primæval fountain whence the malady has flowed, and corrupted more than one half of a mighty nation. To folve the difficulty, we need not go to that

remote

remote period when the firſt murderer of the human race ſlew an amiable and unoffending brother. In the earlieſt events of the poſt-diluvain ages, and in the adverſe principles of Shem and Ham, we ſhall find the baneful, and what I cannot avoid calling the *true*, ſource of this diſtinction of the Indians into two grand ſects, each bearing a deadly and implacable hatred to each other, inſomuch, that when a follower of Veeſhnu meets one of the ſect of Seeva, he thinks himſelf polluted, and flies to ſome rite of purification for releaſe from the foul ſtain. The colours of theſe two deities are as oppoſite as their opinions; for, Veeſhnu, in the pagodas, is painted blue, while Seeva is white. Brahma differs from both, being painted of a red colour.

Having referred to thoſe grand events that neceſſarily form the baſis of all ancient hiſtory, however unfaſhionable it may be with certain writers of a ſceptical claſs to conſider them as ſuch, I ſhall now as conciſely as poſſible unfold to the reader the plan upon which I have ventured to proceed in the arduous undertaking of writing the ancient hiſtory of a country, whoſe annals are ſo deeply involved in allegory and fable as thoſe of India. He will not conſider the detail as entirely digreſ-

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five, since the ancient religion and the ancient history of India are connected by an inseparable chain; many of the most venerated divinities of India being only their earliest sovereigns deified.

The astonishing population of the Indians as well as of the Chinese, their great advance in civilization, and their cultivation of the sciences, at the most early periods which history records, offered to the historian, at his very outset, a difficulty so irreconcilable to the chronology of the Bible, that some intelligent writers have extended the Scripture-term ARARAT, upon the summit of which mountain the ark of NOAH is said to have rested, to that whole range of mountains which runs across Asia; and have maintained, that the said ark rested, not in Armenia, but on the Indian Caucasus, or one of the mountains to the north of India. In these Indian regions, according to RALEIGH,* but, in China, according to SHUCKFORD,† the virtuous patriarch planted the vine, and established the first happy post-diluvian kingdom. Here, they assert,

* Consult Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, book i. chap. vii. p. 74, ed. folio, 1677.

† See Shuckford's Connection of sacred and profane History, vol. i. p. 101, ed. oct. 1728.

ſert, during the extended and peaceful reign of that great patriarch, the renovated genius of man had ample time and opportunity to improve and expand itſelf: here virtue exulted in the foſtering ſmile of a pious ſovereign, and ſcience ſhot up vigorouſly beneath the protecting wing of power, inveſted at once with the PATERNAL, the PATRIARCHAL, and the REGAL, authority. The arguments, however, which have been adduced by theſe writers, in favour of their darling hypotheſis, and which I ſhall faithfully preſent to the reader in my Hiſtory, are ſpecious, but not ſolid; ingenious, but not convincing. If they poſſeſſed ſtill greater ſpeciouſneſs and ſtill more refined ingenuity, they would be totally inadmiſſible, ſince they oppoſe the tenor of that Sacred Book, by which all Chriſtians are bound to regulate their belief, ſince they are repugnant to the whole ſtream of tradition, and ſince they are made in direct contradiction to an infinite variety of evidence, engraved on the medals and monuments of Aſia, of undoubted authenticity and of the moſt venerable antiquity. The ſyſtem which I have to propoſe, and which, from a few fragments in ancient writers I ſhall, in the Indian Hiſtory, endeavour to eſtabliſh, by no means oppoſes Scripture, violates

probability, or outrages common ſenſe and received tradition. It reaches nearly the ſame end and eſtabliſhes facts nearly ſimilar, without referring to ſuch harſh and improbable means: and, if it does not allow that extended point of latitude to the claims to remote antiquity of the Hindoo nation, which the former hypotheſis does, in point of date, yet it falls only about a century ſhort of that hypotheſis. In fact, it nearly aſcends to the utmoſt point of all genuine chronology in India, the commencement of the CALI-YUG, or preſent age of the world's duration.

For the outlines of the ſyſtem which I have adopted, I profeſs myſelf indebted to the profound inveſtigation of Mr. BRYANT, concerning the migration and diſperſion of nations. Throughout that moſt elaborate performance, I have endeavoured to avail myſelf of many uſeful and important hints, which the SOLID JUDGEMENT and DEEP ERUDITION of the author, when unwarped by a *brilliant fancy*, enable him to afford the hiſtorian. From arguments which I ſhall hereafter endeavour to extend and amplify, Mr. BRYANT inſiſts upon a migration of the ſeveral branches of the great family that ſurvived the deluge, LONG ANTECEDENT to the confuſion

fusion of tongues at Babel, and the consequent supposed dispersion of all mankind. That migration, he labours to demonstrate, took place, not from the plain of Shinar, but from the region of Ararat, where the ark rested. He contends, that neither the confusion of tongues nor the dispersion itself was *universal*, but would confine those two circumstances to the daring and rebellious race, who were engaged in the erection of that stupendous monument of human ambition and folly, the tower of Babel. His arguments are particularly forcible on that point, so truly important, if indeed that point can be established on a solid basis in an historical inquiry like the present, concerning the antiquity and disputed priority of the different Asiatic nations: some authors contending for the superior antiquity of the Scythians or Tartars, some for the Chinese, and others for the Indians. Mr. Bryant's idea is, that, by the term *confounding the language*, we ought to understand merely the confounding of the *lip*, or mode of pronunciation; and this labial failure he afterwards explains, by describing it as an utter inability to speak clearly and intelligibly, an incapacity to articulate their words.*

* Analysis of Ancient Mythology, vol. iii. p. 31.

With reſpect to the aſſerted diſperſion of the human race from that ſpot over *the whole earth*, he avers from authorities, which I muſt alſo hereafter adduce, with ſome additional obſervations of an Indian kind, and relative to the Sanſcreet annals, that the Hebrew word COL ARETZ, tranſlated, *the whole earth*, will likewiſe bear a very different tranſlation: that the word COL is often uſed in the ſenſe of *every*, and that ARETZ, though frequently meant to expreſs *the earth*, occurs continually in the Old Teſtament, in the ſignification of *land* or *province*; as in the remarkable and pertinent inſtance of Aretz Shinar, the land of Shinar; Aretz Canaan, the land of Canaan; Aretz Cuſh, the land of Cuſh; and, he obſerves, the Pſalmiſt uſes both the terms preciſely in the ſenſe here attributed to them. *Their ſound is gone out into every land*; Col Aretz, in omnem terram.*

When I firſt commenced this undertaking, I ingenuouſly acknowledge that the *expenſive* volumes of Mr. Bryant were not in my poſſeſſion; and, when I was at Oxford, I had but curſorily inſpected that learned work. Convinced, however, that the pure primæval theology

* Pſalm xix. verſe 4.

logy of India, as defcribed by Sir William Jones, and as, throughout this Differtation, faithfully reprefented by myfelf, could only be derived from the genuine unadulterated principles that diftinguifhed the virtuous line of SHEM, yet ftaggered by the univerfal prevalence in India, as well in ancient as in modern periods, of the grofs and multiform idolatry of HAM, I remained for a long time involved in the deepeft fufpenfe and in the moft painful perplexity. The farther I advanced in thefe Indian refearches, the more ftriking appeared the contraft; the wider and more irreconcilable the difference. Educated, however, in principles that taught me to look to Chaldæa as to the PARENT-COUNTRY of the world, the nurfe of rifing arts, and the fountain whence human knowledge has flowed by various channels through all the kingdoms of the earth; at the fame time confounded by the authenticated accounts, which have, within thefe few years, been imported into Europe, of the great proficiency of the Indians in the nobleft and moft abftrufe fciences, when the greateft part of Afia had fcarcely even emerged from barbarifm, and when all Europe lay buried in intellectual darknefs; I was juft on the point of throwing away my pen, and

giving up at leaſt *the ancient hiſtory of India*, as involved in inextricable difficulties. The ſacred records were ſilent about their origin; ſuch accounts of them as were to be found in the beſt writers of antiquity, relative to their ancient hiſtory, were often in the higheſt degree romantic, and always unſatisfactory. All that the writers of the Univerſal Hiſtory have related of the hiſtory of ancient India is included in a few pages, and this portion of that voluminous work, from their conſulting only the relations of the hiſtorians of Greece and Rome, who knew very little about them, is extremely defective. With few aids, therefore, from claſſical books, to aſſiſt me in this laborious diſquiſition concerning their antiquities, with little light to direct uncertain conjecture, and with little patronage, at firſt, to animate exertion, I ſhould have laid by my pen in deſpair, but for the accidental attainment and reviſion, when nearly half theſe Diſſertations was printed off, of the Analyſis of Ancient Mythology. As I was determined to advance no farther in a hiſtory, which, in ſome parts, had a ſeeming tendency to throw oblique reflections on the credit of the Moſaic ſyſtem of theology, — that ſublime ſyſtem, which both inclination and profeſſion made

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me anxious to ſupport, — unleſs I ſhould be fully able to obviate thoſe reflections, nothing could be more highly ſatisfactory to me, than to find the grand opening which the hypotheſis, on which the Analyſis was formed, unfolded towards the elucidation of ſo dark a ſubject, and that too in the third volume, a part of the work where ſerious hiſtory commences, where the conjectures of mythology are ſuperſeded by the evidence of well-atteſted facts, and the aſſertions of the ſacred volume of truth are corroborated by incontrovertible teſtimonies from profane authors.

Following the line marked out by Mr. Bryant, I contend, that the firſt migration of mankind from Ararat took place about a century after the appulſe of the ark at Baris, by which time, ſucceſſive ſuns and winds, alternately exerting their force, might have rendered the earth ſufficiently dry for the accompliſhment of ſo diſtant a journey; that either Noah himſelf, whoſe name is ſo clearly recognized in India by the Sanſcreet appellative of Menu, (and it is remarkable that the Arabians at this day diſtinguiſh, as the Hebrews undoubtedly did, the patriarch by the name of Nuh,) or, if not Noah himſelf, ſome deſcendant of Shem, gradually led on the firſt

 colony,

colony, increaſing as they journeyed eaſtward through Perſia, to the weſtern frontiers of India; that its firſt great capital was OUDE, in the province of Bahar, to the magnitude and extent of which city, the ancient records and traditions of India bear ſuch repeated teſtimony; and that the ſecond great inhabited city, equally celebrated in the moſt ancient Hindoo annals, was Haſtinapoor, where Judiſhter reigned, and in the neighbourhood of which, afterwards, was fought the great battle deſcribed in the Mahabbarat, in which ſons and brothers, that is, the deſcendants of SHEM and HAM, periſhed in ſuch a dreadful and promiſcuous carnage; that this happy, this ſecluded, and increaſing, colony flouriſhed for a long ſucceſſion of ages in primitive happineſs and innocence; practiſed the pureſt rites of the grand patriarchal religion, without images and temples, the original devotion of Shem, the SON of GOD, who poſſibly was the genuine legiſlator of India, and in his regal capacity bore his father's title of MENU; that they aſſiduouſly cultivated all the ſciences, and had alſo the uſe of the ſcientific records, and aſtronomical obſervations of their ante-diluvian anceſtors preſerved in the ark; and that, according

cording to the lateſt information imported into Europe in the Aſiatic Reſearches, a colony emigrated about three thouſand years ago from India, and directing their march to regions ſtill nearer the RISING SUN, eſtabliſhed, on the moſt eaſtern boundary of Aſia, the vaſt and celebrated empire of CHINA.

When the riſing tower of Babel was overthrown (as the Orientals report) by ſtorms, earthquakes, and whirlwinds, commiſſioned from the Almighty to level the fabric of man's exorbitant ambition; and when that fierce and preſumptuous race, who had engaged in the mad undertaking of erecting it, were diſperſed over the earth by the breath of God's diſpleaſure, they turned the arm of violence, which had been impiouſly directed towards Heaven itſelf, againſt the pious line of mortals, who were its diſtinguiſhed favourites upon earth. Under Nimrod, their daring chief, the mighty hunter before the Lord both of beaſts and men, this deſperate band of Cuthite robbers, (the GIANTS and TITANS of profane writers,) ejected by the ſignal vengeance of Providence from their own country of Babylon, firſt ſeized upon the dominions of ASSUR, the ſon of Shem. They then extended their ravages towards the beau-

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tiful regions of Perſia, where Elam, another ſon of Shem, reigned: but, in this attempt, thoſe ſons of rapine met with a terrible repulſe; for, the virtuous race of Shem, indignant at theſe repeated attacks from the baſe progeny of HAM, laid aſide the native gentleneſs that diſtinguiſhed their line, and, uniting their forces, after many ſevere engagements, and a conteſt protracted for a long ſeries of years, ſo totally and finally ſubjected their opponents, that, we are told in Scripture, *they ſerved*, that is, paid tribute, to their conquerors during *twelve years*. After this period, their reſtleſs ambition once more impelled them into acts of rebellion.* But, after a ſtill longer war, and a ſtill more bloody defeat, their power in that part of Aſia was totally broken, or rather annihilated. They were driven thence into its moſt remote regions, even into thoſe cold and gloomy Tartarian regions, which, from the darkneſs and fogginеſs of the atmoſphere, as well as their forming the utmoſt boundary of the earth known to the Aſiatics, was anciently conſidered as the abode of guilty and unclean ſpirits, and which, in the fabulous mythology of

* *Twelve years they ſerved* CHEDARLAOMER, *and, in the thirteenth, they rebelled.* — Gen. ch. xii. v. 4.

of the Greeks, was reprefented as HELL IT-SELF. Originally weakened and divided, by the great colony which early emigrated under their great anceftor to Egypt, the remaining pofterity of Ham, though numerous, were not able to cope with four powerful and combined fovereigns of the houfe of Shem; but, rallying their fcattered forces, they proved more than a match for *one* unwarlike branch of that illuftrious line.

Far remote from this turbulent and fanguinary fcene, were fituated the forefathers of the happy nation, whofe hiftory it will hereafter be my province to record. By nature inclined to peace and amity, and by long habitude attached to it, they neither fufpected, nor were prepared for, the attack which the exiled and difcomfited Cuthites were meditating upon their flourifhing country and philofophic race. Collected in innumerable multitudes from all the hyperborean regions beyond Caucafus, regions called from them, as I have before remarked, Cutha, Scuthe, and Scythia; one party hovered, like a dark and angry cloud, over the clifts of that vaft mountain, whence they frequently ftretched their longing view over the Pifgah, which they were impatient to poffefs. Another party of

this intrepid tribe, which had taken poſſeſſion of the tract on the weſt of the Indus, in after-times called alſo from them Indo-Scythia, waited only the ſignal from their brethren to paſs that frontier river, and ruſh upon the devoted Panjab of India. The former, as ſeems to be intimated by numerous paſſages which I ſhall hereafter cite from the Dionyſiacs of Nonnus, as well as from Dionyſius the geographer, purſuing the courſe of the GANGES through Sirinagur, a country whoſe frightful rocks had no power to diſmay that progeny, to whom gloomy and terrible objects, and deeds of extraordinary peril, ever afforded a ſavage delight, entered Hindoſtan at the paſs of HURDWAR, and ſeized upon the rich and fertile region watered by that river. Theſe aſſertions may appear preſumptuous as they are novel; but the reader will recollect, that I am labouring to throw light on a dark and remote period, where all is doubt and conjecture. I ſhall give ſubſtantial reaſons for adopting this ſyſtem in my hiſtory. Two of thoſe reaſons only ſhall be mentioned at preſent. The firſt, and that which originally induced me to eſpouſe the hypotheſis, and indulge the conjectures thus ſummarily ſtated, is, the relation which, from authentic Indian books

books and traditions, the Ayeen Akbery* has given us of the immenſe extent and unequalled magnificence of the great city and kingdom of Oude in the moſt ancient periods. The ſecond is, that this very account is, in the fulleſt manner, corroborated by ſtill ſtronger evidence adduced by me from Sir William Jones,† who informs us, that RAMA was the firſt Indian conqueror; that he extended his victories even to the Peninſula and Ceylone; that his capital was Oude, where he was venerated (by his own tribe and poſterity) both as a KING and PROPHET; and that the preſent city of Lucknow was only *one of the gates* of that vaſt metropolis. There were, however, it muſt be obſerved, three heroes of the name of RAMA, celebrated in the Indian annals; but, according to the laſt author, their ſplendid exploits may all be referred to this mighty ſon of CUSH.

The Cuthites, who entered India over the SEENDHU, probably puſhed on and extended their conqueſts along the weſtern regions of India, till they had eſtabliſhed themſelves in that famous city, which Arrian

* See the Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 41.

† Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i.

rian ſays was the capital of the CUTHEI, *Sangara*; and which was afterwards taken by ſtorm by Alexander. SHINAR, ſays Mr. Bryant, is ſometimes called Singar and Singara; and, it is not impoſſible, that, attached to that country from which they were ſo diſgracefully driven, theſe ſucceſsful invaders of India might give this name to their new metropolis, in memorial of their original country. The alteration of a letter is not material; for, D'Anville is inclined to think, that Sangania, a province of Guzzurat, may be the Sangara of Arrian, to which, however, I own Major Rennel urges a ſtrong objection; and I only introduce the remark by way of obſerving, that, if this *were* in reality the Sangara of Arrian, the inhabitants have not at all ſwerved from their original character, ſince, according to Hamilton, they were, in his time, the greateſt robbers and banditti on that whole coaſt, and they continue ſo to this day.

To relate the conflicts of rival colonies and contending nations is the buſineſs of hiſtory rather than of a treatiſe upon theology.— Suffice it then for the preſent to add, that immediately after the great and deciſive battle deſcribed in the Mahabbarat, the national

theology, politics, and manners, experienced a total change. It was the immediate confequence of the triumph of the invading Cuthites, that all the degenerate fuperftitions of Ham, the worfhip of the PHALLUS, the veneration of SERPENTS, the adoration of the SOLAR ORB, HUMAN SACRIFICES, and every other Egyptian rite, the remarkable prevalence of which in India has fo long perplexed the antiquary, commenced. Stupendous caverns were fcooped from the bowels of the earth, and vaft pyramidal temples were erected upon its furface.

No nation upon earth, fays the author of the Analyfis, was ever fo addicted to gloom and melancholy as thefe wandering fons of Ham. In confequence, the primitive, mild, and benignant, religion of Hindoftan fuddenly changed its feature, and the angel of benevolence, that before prefided over and directed the public worfhip of the Deity, was converted into a dæmon, with an afpect replete with wrath and menacing vengeance. This alteration in the religious worfhip foon became vifible in the appearance and manners of the people. The deep wrinkle of thought, and the pale caft of defpair and melancholy, fat upon the countenance, formerly illumined with the

brighteft

brighteſt ray of hope; while the eye, that once ſparkled with holy tranſport, now ſunk in all the languor of grief, or became darkened with the ſcowl of miſtruſt. A tedious round of ſuperſtitious ceremonies uſurped the place of genuine devotion. Modes of penance, the moſt frightful and excruciating, were eſtabliſhed in the room of that heart-felt contrition which is at once moſt pleaſing, and muſt prove moſt pacificatory, to a God of benignity and compaſſion. Emaciated with continued famine, and ſtaggering through extreme weakneſs, in all the conſecrated groves and foreſts of India, were ſeen the expiring victims of voluntary torture.* The temples echoed with the ſhrieks of penitentiary anguiſh, and the altars were deluged with a wanton profuſion both of human and beſtial blood.

The deity himſelf, the great BRAHME, who the Indians were originally taught was a ſpirit, and that every ſymbolic repreſentation muſt neceſſarily degrade him, was, in time, diſhonoured by the moſt humiliating ſimilitudes, and delineated by the moſt monſtrous ſculptures. Theſe ſculptures, indeed, were

* In the Heetopades, the foreſt of the prophet Goutama is mentioned as the foreſt dedicated to acts of penitential mortification. Heetopades, page 243.

were not all deſigned, nor executed, with equal want of ſkill. There is one on the Ganges highly deſerving notice, of Haree (a title of Veeſhnu) ſleeping on a vaſt ſerpent, both figures of exquiſite workmanſhip; and the fabrication of which, as well as of the caverns of Salſette and Elephanta, on the two oppoſite ſhores of India, may juſtly be aſſigned to the remoteſt æra of the Indian empire. It is thus deſcribed by Mr. Wilkins, in his notes to the Heetopades; "Nearly oppoſite to Sultangunge, a conſiderable town in the province of Bahar, in the Eaſt Indies, there ſtands a rock of granite, forming a ſmall iſland in the midſt of the Ganges, known to Europeans by the name of the Rock of Jehangeery, which is highly worthy of the traveller's notice, for a vaſt number of images carved in relief upon every part of its ſurface. Among the reſt there is Haree, of a gigantic ſize, recumbent upon a coiled ſerpent; whoſe heads, which are numerous, the artiſt has contrived to ſpread into a kind of canopy over the ſleeping god; and from each of its mouths iſſues a forked tongue, ſeeming to threaten inſtant death to any whom raſhneſs might prompt to diſturb him. The whole figure

lies almoſt clear of the block on which it is hewn. It is finely imagined, and executed with great ſkill."

It was the peculiar delight of this enterpriſing race to erect ſtupendous edifices; to excavate long ſubterraneous paſſages from the living rock; to form vaſt lakes; to extend over the hollow of adjoining mountains magnificent arches for aqueducts and bridges; in ſhort, to attempt whatever was hazardous and difficult; and to carry into execution whatever appeared to the reſt of mankind impracticable. Aſſyria and Egypt were covered with theſe wonders in ſculpture and prodigies in art, which their daring genius and perſevering induſtry executed. It was they who built the tower of Belus and raiſed the pyramids of Egypt; it was they who formed the grottoes near the Nile, and ſcooped the caverns of Salſette and Elephanta. Their ſkill in mechanical powers, to this day, aſtoniſhes poſterity, who are unable to conceive by what means ſtones, thirty, forty, and even ſixty, feet in length, and from twelve to twenty feet in breadth, could ever be reared to that wonderful point of elevation at which they were ſeen, by Pococke and Norden, in the ruined temples of Balbec and the Thebais.

Thoſe that compoſe the pagodas of India are ſcarcely leſs wonderful in magnitude and elevation, and they evidently diſplay the bold architecture of the ſame indefatigable artificers. What we cannot allow to Mr. D'Ancarville as to Semiramis, who probably was an imaginary being, or, if not imaginary, certainly never penetrated ſo far into India, may yet be allowed to the primæval anceſtors of the nation over whom ſhe governed.

Thus have I endeavoured to account, in a manner, I truſt, ſomewhat more ſatisfactory than hitherto attempted, for the immenſe diſparity and viciſſitude ſubſiſting, through ſucceſſive ages, in ſentiment and practice, between the Indians, or rather between the two great ſects of Veeſhnu and Seeva; between thoſe who delight in bloody ſacrifices, and thoſe who ſhudder at them. It appears to me the moſt plauſible method for ſolving the hiſtorical difficulty, and the only certain clue for unravelling the theological myſtery. Had Sir William Jones completed his ſtrictures upon the origin and priority of the Aſiatic nations, or fixed the central country, in which, he ſeems to intimate, mankind were firſt ſettled, and from which, he aſſerts, all nations emigrated, I ſhould have been enabled

to proceed with more confidence, and lefs danger of error. It will be remembered, however, that the whole, which I thus offer, is profeffedly conjecture; and nothing could afford me greater pleafure than to renounce conjecture entirely upon fo important a fubject, and facrifice hypothefis and opinion at the altar of truth.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER II.

The peculiar Manners, Cuſtoms, and Ceremonies, of the BRAHMINS *detailed, and compared with the Accounts given by Greek and Roman Writers of the ancient* BRACHMANES.—*Peculiar* FRUITS, GRAIN, SPICES, *and* AROMATICS, *uſed in* SACRIFICE *by the Brahmins; all remarkable for their great ſanative Virtues, or other diſtinguiſhed Properties in the vegetable World.* —*The ſacred* BELLS *and* CONQUES, *or* SHELLS, *immemorably uſed in Indian Temples, conſidered.*—*The Veneration of the Veeſhnuvites for certain conſecrated Stones.*—*The uncommon Splendor of the Indian* POOJA, *or Worſhip. The* SACRED DANCE *of Antiquity conſidered, and the* MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS *made uſe of to animate that Dance.*—*The Whole compared with Egyptian, Hebrew, Syrian, and Greek, reſembling Rites and Ceremonies.*

AFTER having, in the preceding chapter, unfolded the great outlines of the intended hiſtory, I proceed, in the preſent, to the conſideration of other intereſting circum-

ſtances, relative to the Brahmins, not yet detailed, with which, either their native books or the Greek and Roman writers have make us acquainted. On this point we may tread, with bolder footſtep, the ground of claſſical antiquity.

Voluminous, and, in general, juſt, have been the diſquiſitions of ancient claſſical writers, relative to the religious tenets, the ſevere habits, the exalted virtues, of this ſuperior order or CAST of men. As the Brachmans (for ſo, in compliment to thoſe writers, we muſt, for a ſhort time, denominate them) were the guides of the people in religious, ſo were they the counſellors of the prince in civil, concerns; and, like the MAGI of Perſia, they enjoyed this two-fold office by hereditary right. Their literary purſuits, therefore, were of various kinds; for, while ſome of thoſe venerable ſages made theology and philoſophy their ſole ſtudy, others, among them, added to thoſe ſciences very refined and profound ſpeculations on the great ſocial and political duties, and were verſed in all the maxims of juriſprudence. In conſequence of this, we meet with Brachmans at the courts of princes, and Brachmans in the ſolitudes of the wilderneſs: but, whether we deſcend with

them

them into the reclufe cell, or enter with them the folitary foreft, where, as in the academic groves of Greece, the great myfteries of nature were inveftigated, and the fublime truths of morality were inculcated; or whether we purfue their footfteps to the crowded city, and the fplendid palace, where kings were proud to entertain them as their guefts; the elevation of their genius and the dignity of their character appear alike confpicuous. The blamelefs tenour of their lives, the fimplicity of their manners, their temperance, their chaftity, their deep theological and political wifdom, fecured the veneration of the vulgar, and awed even majefty, feated in fplendour upon the imperial throne.

If the fpeech of Dindamis to Alexander, preferved for pofterity by Biffæus,* be not the entire fabrication of the editor's fancy, it remains a wonderful proof of the deep reflection, the undaunted firmnefs, and the found political wifdom, of the fpeaker. The Brachmans, indeed, in fome inftances, carried their practices of felf-denial to fuch extreme lengths; endured the viciffitudes of a climate

* Thus Sir Edward Byfhe, Clarencieux king-at-arms, in the reign of Charles the Second, and editor of Palladius and thefe very curious letters of Dindamis, ftyles himfelf.

alternately ſubject to the raging tempeſt and the ſcorching ſun with ſuch unſhaken reſolution; and courted, with ſuch unabating zeal, every opportunity of ſhewing their contempt of life, and what are uſually thought its felicities, that we ſhould be at a loſs to account for the motives of a conduct ſo widely deviating from eſtabliſhed rules, did we not know that the pride of human diſtinction, and the impulſive ardour of emulation, often ſtimulate mankind to the wildeſt and moſt extravagant eccentricities.

Placed, by the policy and partiality of the legiſlator, in a rank of life ſuperior to their princes, deſpiſing the glare of wealth and the pageantry of courts, anxious for no food but the fruits of the earth, and thirſting for no beverage but that of the chryſtal ſtream which watered his ſolitude; his paſſions reſtrained by his temperance, and his ambition bounded by the paucity of his wants; the PRIEST of BRAHMA had nothing to diſtract his thoughts from the duties of his function. The inſtruction of the younger Brachmans; the numerous, the ſtated, and frequently-returning, rites of ablution and ſacrifice; meditation on the perfections of the Deity in private; and acts of benevolence to his fellow-

creatures

creatures in public; occupied the whole of his well-ſpent day: while the night was conſumed in prayer to his God, and hymns to his praiſe, in the light ſlumbers which temperance beſtows, and in the ſolid peace which innocence enjoys. Such was the true Brachman of antiquity; and ſuch, notwithſtanding the general degradation of that ſacred order, is the inoffenſive life of many a modern Brahmin; who, remote from the cares and commerce of the world, offers up to heaven his devout oriſons and bloodleſs oblations on the flowery borders of the KISTNA and on the luxuriant banks of the GANGES.

Diodorus Siculus* informs us, that the ancient Brachmans acknowledged the whole ſyſtem of their civil and religious policy to have been derived from Dionyſius; that, in conſequence of their veneration for that perſonage, who introduced at once the knowledge of arms and literature into India, divine rites were inſtituted in honour of him, and that many cities of India, in the language of the country, were called by his name. It is much to be lamented, that neither the Greeks who attended Alexander into India, nor thoſe who were long connected with it under the Bactrian

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 124. Rhodoman.

trian princes, have left us any means of knowing what vernacular languages they found after their arrival in that empire. Pliny, by mentioning that the Indus was called by the natives Sindus, is almoſt the only inſtance of the kind. It was, however, without doubt, the Sanſcreet, or, at leaſt, a dialect of it. The evidence of this aſſertion is derived from various records and public inſcriptions, ſince diſcovered, of antiquity almóſt coeval with that period, and of which more than one ſpecimen is exhibited in the Aſiatic Reſearches. Sir William Jones intimates his belief, that Bacchus, or Dionyſos, as the Greeks denominated him, was the ſame deity as Rama before-mentioned. As I have devoted a particular portion of my hiſtory to the conſideration of what the ancients have aſſerted concerning the invaſion of India by Bacchus, I ſhall not in this place anticipate what is there, perhaps in a more connected manner, related, concerning the true origin and hiſtory of that celebrated perſonage. What thoſe Brachmans related to the Grecians concerning their veneration for Bacchus, a Grecian divinity, might be artfully intended to conciliate the regard or to avert the vengeance of their conquerors: no great ſtreſs can therefore be laid on information

formation given under doubtful motives and propagated from a fuſpicious quarter. But the declaration, that many cities in India were called after that name, ought to lead to ſome diſcovery in regard to the real character alluded to under the name of Bacchus, or Dionyſos. It is in vain, however, that we ſeek for any name analogous to theſe words in the places mentioned in the Indian hiſtory of this deity, if we except the two inſtances ſpecified by Sir William Jones of Naiſhada, or Nyſa, and Meru, the one a mountain and the other a city of northern India; but, if we caſt our eyes over the map of Hindoſtan, or over Mr. Rennel's moſt uſeful index to that map, we may find the appellative of Ram blended with a very large proportion of the proper names of cities and places in India, either as an initial or as a termination. Two places, diſtinguiſhed by this name, near the ſouthern extremity of the Malabar coaſt, which was the ſcene of his mightieſt achievements, when waging war with the giant Ravan, king of Lanca, have been already ſpecified in a part of the Geographical Diſſertation, to which may be added Ramaſſeram, an iſland ſituated between Ceylone and the continent celebrated for its pagoda, and much corroborative evi-

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dence of a ſimilar kind will hereafter be adduced, which apparently eſtabliſhes, beyond a doubt, our poſition that Bacchus and Ram were the ſame perſons. Not the leaſt probable is a circumſtance which I have not yet ſeen noticed, that the very name of Seſoſtris, the ſuppoſed Bacchus, who invaded India, was Rameſes or Rameſtes. Indeed, if we allow the ſtrong and reiterated aſſertion of Sir Iſaac Newton, in his Chronology of ancient Kingdoms, that Bacchus was the Egyptian Seſoſtris, to be well founded, the matter is at once decided; for, the more diſtinguiſhed title by which that conqueror was denominated in the Egyptian records, and on the obeliſks which Manetho ſaw, was RAMESES or RAMESTES.

The whole relation of Diodorus, as well as the relations of moſt of the ancient claſſical writers, only tend to throw over the early hiſtory of India the veil of inextricable confuſion. The readieſt way of ſolving the enigma is to ſuppoſe, that, what the Indians related of their great hero and god RAM, the Greeks applied in their uſual way to their equally-venerated warrior and divinity. In fact, if we examine with attention the peculiar religious ceremonies obſerved by this wonderful

derful cast, we shall find them, like all those before recapitulated, strangely tinctured with Egyptian manners; and, if the difficulty is not allowed to be solved by the plan I have above sketched out, we must wait for the full solution of the question from our indefatigable countrymen, who are so laudably busied in exploring the monuments of antiquity in Asia.

It is an invariable rule with the Brahmins to perform their devotions *three times* every day; at sun-rise, at noon, and at sun-set. This is a practice so entirely consonant with what Plutarch relates concerning the Egyptian priests, that I must be excused for once more adverting to his Isis and Osiris, especially as that writer adds some curious particulars relative to this triple adoration of the sun, or rather, as I conceive, of the Deity, who, our own Scriptures inform us, *posuit tabernaculum ejus in sole.* The Egyptians then resembled the Brahmins, not only in offering sacrifice and burning incense to the sun THREE TIMES in the day, but, in those sacrifices, they made use of such things as suited best with the nature of a worship involved in mystery, with their speculations in physics, and with their notions of health and personal purification.

Thus

Thus in the morning they threw into the ſacred vaſe of incenſe a quantity of RESIN, whoſe ſubtle and penetrative vapour at once rarefied and refined the air, enveloped with the fogs of the paſt night, and cheered the ſpirits ſunk down under oppreſſion and languor from the ſame cauſe. At noon, he tells us, they burned MYRRH for incenſe, in order to diſſipate the groſs exhalations drawn up from the humid ſoil of Egypt by the intenſe heat of a vertical ſun. MYRRH, he adds, is in the ancient Egyptian dialect called BAL, which means the *diſſipation of melancholy*, and that burning MYRRH, according to phyſicians, is the means of diſperſing noxious vapours, and often even of curing peſtilential diſeaſes, occaſioned by them, as was evidenced at Athens in the plague. The incenſe offered at the evening-ſacrifice is compoſed of no leſs than ſixteen different ingredients; not, ſays this writer, becauſe the number of thoſe ingredients forms the *ſquare of a ſquare*, and is the only number, which, having all its ſides equal the one to the other, makes its perimeter equal to its area; but on account of the rich aromatic nature of thoſe ingredients. The evening-incenſe formed of this mixture, the natives themſelves call KUPHI. Now re-

ſinous

ſinous gums, aromatic woods, and conſecrated graſſes of various kinds, are the uſual oblations in the Indian temples. Our beſt myrrh is known to come from the Eaſt Indies, and aloes is the favourite perfume of the inhabitants; but the richer and more extenſive country of India producing a greater quantity of valuable drugs than Egypt, the altars of their gods are conſequently covered with more abundant variety of precious offerings of this kind. It ſhall be our buſineſs to enumerate a few of them; and, in the firſt place, let us treat of the vegetable productions offered up in ſacrifice, and the occaſion of their being devoted to the Deity.

Among the different ſorts of conſecrated graſſes, fruits, and flowers, offered on the altars of India, may be numbered, the graſſes called CUSA and HERBE by the Brahmins, both highly venerated for virtues which their ſacred books deſcribe;* the fruit of the mango, grains of gengely, the root and leaves of beetel, Indian ſpikenard, flowers of ſaffron, the herb bilva, renowned in Hindoo fables, and grains of all kinds, but particularly of rice in great abundance. Theſe vegetable productions form a ſpecies of oblation the moſt ancient

* See various preceding quotations from the Sacontala.

ancient and pure of all others. To offer to the Deity the firſt-fruits of the tender herbage, ſpringing up in the vernal ſeaſon, and of the different kinds of grain and fruits matured by a warm ſun, was the practice of mankind in the infancy of the world. The earlieſt inſtance of theſe oblations on record is that of Cain, the eldeſt ſon of the firſt great huſbandman, who, doubtleſs, following paternal precedent, *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord*, and of Abel, who alſo, to the ſacred altar of God, *brought of the firſtlings of his flock.* The Jews, whoſe religious cuſtoms are, in many reſpects, ſimilar to the Hindoos, in every age and period of their empire, inviolably conſecrated to heaven the firſt-fruits of *their oil, their wine, and their wheat*, and, by the divine inſtitution, even *whatſoever opened the womb, whether of man or beaſt, was ſacred to the Lord.** Such was the origin of oblations; they were the tribute of the human mind, overflowing with affection and gratitude to the all-bounteous Father.

There was, according to Porphyry,† a very curious and ancient feſtival, annually celebrated at Athens to the honour of the SUN and

* See Numbers, xviii. 12, et ſeq.

† De abſtinentia, p. 73.

and HOURS, which, in the ſimplicity of the offerings, remarkably reſembled the practice of the firſt ages. During that feſtival, conſecrated graſs was carried about, in which the kernels of olives were wrapt up together with figs, all kinds of pulſe, oaken leaves, with acorns, and cakes compoſed of the meal of wheat and barley, heaped up in a *pyramidal* form, alluſive to the ſun-beams that ripened the grain, as well as to the fire in which they were finally conſumed. The feſtival was called Θαργηλιον, from Θαργηλια, a general word, ſays Archbiſhop Potter on this feſtival, for all the fruits of the earth.* The Indians, whoſe ſyſtem of theology, in many reſpects, retains its primitive feature, although, in others, it has been deeply adulterated, have a variety of feſtivals ſacred to Surya and his mythological progeny. There is one in particular, alluded to before, called Surya Pooja, or worſhip of the ſun, which falls on the ſeventh day of the new moon in January, and, on which day, offerings of peculiar conſecrated flowers are made to that deity.† On the firſt Thurſday in the month of Auguſt

 falls

* The reader may conſult Potter's Archæologia Greca, vol. i. p. 400.

† Holwell's Account of the Indian Feſtivals, part ii. p. 134.

falls the Pooja, or worſhip of Lachſmi, the goddeſs of abundance, or Ceres of Hindoſtan, whoſe altars are then decorated with oblations of PADDY, the name given to rice in the huſk.* She has another grand feſtival on getting in the harveſt, when ſhe is univerſally adored with many ſolemn rites. Theſe feſtivals I conſider as of the moſt ancient date of any exiſting in India, ſince the firſt is a plain relic of the oldeſt known ſuperſtition, and the others, probably, flouriſhed ever ſince nature was bountiful and man was grateful. The Grecian feſtivals to the Sun and Ceres were probably inſtituted from them; and, hereafter, cloſer compariſon and inveſtigation may, perhaps, ſhew us, not only the Surya and Lachſmi, but many other Indian feſtivals flouriſhing in Greece.

By degrees, the Indians, and mankind in general, advanced in the number and value of their oblations. From graſſes, fruits, flowers, and grain, they proceeded to offer up rich aromatics; and, having experienced the purifying and healing virtues of many coſtly drugs, they burnt myrrh, aloes, benzoin, camphire, and ſandal-wood, in the ever-flaming vaſe of ſacrifice.

From

* Holwell's Account of the Indian Feſtivals, part ii. p. 127.

From theſe ἀρωματα, according to Porphyry, the cenſer, or pan, in which the Greeks burned incenſe, came to be called θυμιατηριος, and to perform ſacrifice was called θυειν, while the ſacrifices themſelves were denominated θυσιαι. Hence the Latin word THUS, frankincenſe, or, as it is ſometimes uſed, incenſe in general. There can be little doubt that the Indians, in burning theſe woods, were actuated by the ſame motives which guided the Egyptian prieſts; viz. to adminiſter to health as well as religion, ſince the numerous ablutions and purifications of the Hindoos demonſtrate, that, like thoſe prieſts, they thought the preſervation of health a branch of religious duty.

But, to proceed in deſcribing the progreſs of ſacrificial rites, at leaſt ſo far as India is concerned. They ſoon contrived to extract from theſe precious woods a rich eſſential oil, with the pureſt portion of which they proceeded to anoint the idols they adored. Oil of gengely, oil of cocoa-nut, oil of ſandal-wood, and other expenſive oils, during the continuance of the Pooja, or public worſhip, with their rich ſtreams, perpetually bathe the ſhining countenance of the Indian deity, and the ſtench, ariſing from a hundred burning lamps, is, for a moment, vanquiſhed by the

more powerful effluvia of the moſt exquiſite odours. I have before had occaſion to mention the very high antiquity of this cuſtom in the Oriental world, reaching up even to the time of the patriarch Jacob, *who poured oil upon the ſtone which he had ſet up for a pillar*, calling that pillar Beth-el, the houſe, or ſhrine, of God. From this conduct of the pious patriarch, I contended, came the Pagan practice of conſecrating certain ſacred ſtones called BÆTYLI, anointing them with odoriferous oils, and venerating them as divine oracles, oracles into which the Deity had deigned to deſcend, drawn down by the energy of prayer and the force of magical incantations.

The ardor of the devout Brahmin ſtops not here. Inured from his youth to rigid temperance, and unconſcious to the guilty banquet of blood, he beholds with horror the fleſh of ſlaughtered animals: he is principally cheriſhed by the nutritious milk of the benevolent animal, whom he conſiders as the emblem of the deity; and he feeds upon the pure honey elaborated by the induſtrious bee. His grateful heart, therefore, returns a tithe to heaven, and ample libations of milk and honey lave the ſanctuary of his god. When

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that milk becomes butter, a portion is ſet apart for the deity, but clarified, leſt, during the proceſs, any impurities ſhould have been blended with it. With this clarified butter, or GHEE, as the Indians term it, upon grand feſtivities, the holy flame of the altar is fed, and numerous lamps, kindled around, blaze forth with purer ſplendor and more vigorous energy. The two following paſſages in the Sacontala, quoted, I believe, before, will evince at once the uſe, and the antiquity of the uſe, of this ingredient in the Indian ſacrifices. "My ſweet child, there has been a happy omen: the young Brahmin, who officiated in our morning-ſacrifice, though his ſight was impeded by clouds of ſmoke, dropped the clarified butter into the very centre of the adorable flame." — "My beſt beloved, come and walk with me round the ſacrificial fire. May theſe fires preſerve thee! fires, which ſpring to their appointed ſtations on the holy hearth, and conſume the conſecrated wood, while the freſh blades of myſterious cuſa-graſs lie ſcattered around them! ſacramental fires, which deſtroy ſin with the riſing fumes of clarified butter!" P. 47.

It has already been obſerved, that one indiſpenſable ceremony in the Indian Pooja is

the ringing of a ſmall bell by the officiating Brahmin. We have alſo ſeen, that *the women of the idol*, or dancing girls of the pagoda, have little golden bells faſtened to their feet, the ſoft harmonious tinkling of which vibrates in uniſon with the exquiſite melody of their voices.

The BELL, in fact, ſeems to have been a ſacred utenſil of very ancient uſe in Aſia. Golden bells formed a part of the ornaments of the pontifical robe of the Jewiſh high-prieſt, with which he inveſted himſelf upon thoſe grand and peculiar feſtivals, when he entered into the ſanctuary. That robe was very magnificent, it was ordained to be of ſky-blue, and the border of it, at the bottom, was adorned with pomegranates and gold bells intermixed equally, and at equal diſtances. The uſe and intent of theſe bells are evident, from the paſſage immediately following. *And it ſhall be upon Aaron to miniſter, and his ſound ſhall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* Ezekiel, xxviii. 23. He was never to make his appearance before the ſhechinah of glory without this richly-ornamented tunic, and he was forbidden to wear it except when engaged in the moſt

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ſolemn rites of his miniſtry. The ſound of the numerous bells, that covered the hem of his garment, gave notice to the aſſembled people that the moſt awful ceremony of their religion had commenced. When arrayed in this garb, he bore into the ſanctuary the veſſel of incenſe. It was the ſignal to proſtrate themſelves before the Deity, and to commence thoſe fervent ejaculations which were to aſcend with the rich column of that incenſe to the throne of heaven.

Calmet has a curious article upon this ſubject of ſacred bells.* He tells us that the ancient kings of Perſia, who, in fact, united in their own perſons the regal and ſacerdotal office, were accuſtomed to have the fringes of their robes adorned with pomegranates and golden bells: that the Arabian courtiſans, like the Indian women, have little golden bells faſtened round their legs, neck, and elbows, to the ſound of which they dance before the king; and that the Arabian princeſſes wear golden rings on their fingers, to which little bells are ſuſpended, as well as in the flowing treſſes of their hair, that their ſuperior rank may be known, and they them-

* See Calmet's Dictionary on the word BELL.

ſelves, in paſſing, receive the homage due to their exalted ſtation.

To return from this digreſſion to the ſounding of ſacred bells in the ſervice of the Indian deities, I am of opinion, that there is another reaſon for the invariable uſe of them in the ceremonials of the pagoda. It is connected with their notions of evil dæmons, who are ſuppoſed to moleſt the devotee in his religious exerciſes, by aſſuming frightful forms in order to inſpire terror into his ſoul, and detach his thoughts from the ſteady contemplation of the benignant numen. "O king," exclaim the terrified Brahmins in the Sacontala, "while we are beginning our evening-ſacrifice, the figures of blood-thirſty dæmons, embrowned by clouds, collected at the departure of day, glide over the ſacred hearth, and ſpread conſternation around." P. 205.

The vibration of the ſacred bell, however, was ever heard with horror by the malign dæmons, who fled at the ſound, while the air, being put in motion by it, became purified of the infection which their preſence imparted. From Aſia, it is probable, that the bell, with a thouſand concomitant ſuperſtitions, was imported into Europe, and mingled with the rites of a purer religion. Every body knows

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its importance in the Roman Catholic worſhip; the ceremony of anathematizing with bell, book, and burning taper; and the thrilling ſound of the dreadful *paſſing bell*, which not only warns the devout Chriſtian to pray for the departing ſoul of his brother, and to prepare to meet his own doom, but drives away, ſaid the good Catholics of old time, thoſe evil ſpirits that hover round the bed of the dying man, eager to ſeize their prey, or, at leaſt, to moleſt and terrify the ſoul in its paſſage into eternal reſt. Hence, poſſibly, the great price paid for tolling the great bell, whoſe awful and portentous voice filled thoſe perturbed ſpirits with increaſed aſtoniſhment and direr diſmay, driving them far beyond the pariſh bounds into diſtant charnel-vaults and other dreary ſubterraneous cavities. This deteſtation of the ſound of bells, ſo natural to wicked dæmons that infeſt the atmoſphere, is pointedly deſcribed in the Golden Legend, by W. de Worde. "It is ſaid, the evill ſpirytes that ben in the regyon of th'ayre doubte moche when they here the belles rongen: and this is the cauſe why the belles ben rongen whan it thondreth, and whan grete tempeſte and outrages of wether happen, to the ende that the feinds and wycked ſpirytes ſhold be abaſhed,

abaſhed, and flee, and ceaſe of the movyng of the tempeſte."*

Mr. Forbes, of Stanmore-Hill, in his elegant muſeum of Indian rarities, numbers two of the bells that have been uſed in devotion by the Brahmins. They are great curioſities, and one of them in particular appears to be of very high antiquity, in form very much reſembling the cup of the lotos, and the tune of it is uncommonly ſoft and melodious. I could not avoid being deeply affected with the ſound of an inſtrument which had been actually employed to kindle the flame of that ſuperſtition, which I have attempted ſo extenſively to unfold. My tranſported thoughts travelled back to the remote period when the Brahmin religion blazed forth in all its ſplendour in the caverns of Elephanta: I was, for a moment, entranced, and caught the ardor of enthuſiaſm. A tribe of venerable prieſts, arrayed in flowing ſtoles, and decorated with high tiaras, ſeemed aſſembled around me, the myſtic ſong of initiation vibrated in my ear, I breathed an air fragrant with the richeſt perfumes, and contemplated the deity in the fire that ſymbolized him.

With

* Golden Legend, p. 90.

With reſpect to the CONCH, or SHELL, blown during the Pooja by the Brahmins, I have not obtained the ſame advantage of perſonally examining it, as I was able to procure in the caſe of the ſacred bell, and can only aſſert, on the authority of a gentleman profoundly verſed in the Hindoo mythology, that this venerated ſhell has, or ought to have, nine valves or foldings, in memorial of Veeſhnu's nine paſt incarnations. The ſacred inſtruments of antiquity have nearly all of them a mythological alluſion. The cymbals, whoſe exquiſite notes reſounded during the celebration of the rites of the Grecian Rhea, were allegorical of the harmony that pervades univerſal nature, that nature of which ſhe herſelf was the perſonification. The ſiſtra of Iſis in Egypt, with their three croſs bars of gold, ſilver, or braſs, denoted the *three elements* of nature, to a race who conſidered water only as the aërial element condenſed. The violent agitation and rattling noiſe of theſe bars, when the ſiſtra were ſhaken at her feſtival, pointed out the concuſſion of the primitive atoms, and the elementary conflict that prevailed at the birth of nature. The conch of India, indicative of the nine incarnations of Veeſhnu, naturally brings to our recollection the teſtudo,

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or tortoiseshell, of which Mercury formed his famous lyre, whose three strings had a mythological allusion to the three seasons that composed the Egyptian year, and were made of the sinews of Typhon, the evil genius, to shew that out of discord true harmony arises. This shell is always blown by the Brahmins in the same manner as the wind-instruments of the Jews, the *shophar*, or trumpet, and the *jubal*, or ram's horn, during their religious ceremonies, were blown by the priests alone. When the walls of Jericho were miraculously overthrown, *seven priests blowing seven trumpets of rams' horns* were commanded to make the circuit of that devoted city, at the terrific blast of which, on the seventh day, those walls were levelled with the dust.* These sacred instruments were supposed to be defiled by the breath of the vulgar Hindoo and the unpurified Hebrew. The awful clangor announced the deity's descent to his throne upon the flaming altar; the ear of devotion was penetrated by the sound; and the eye of ecstasy was rivetted to the blaze. Even on the illumined summit of Sinai, when the true God descended in all the majesty of his glory to promulge the law, *the voice of the trumpet sounded long,*

* Joshua, vi. 20.

long, and waxed louder and louder: and, we are farther told, that, at the dreadful day of final judgement for that law infringed, *the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the* TRUMP OF GOD.*

It is not, however, only the conch-ſhell that is venerated by the Brahmins; there is a certain ſtone of high myſtical virtue, and, for the ſame reaſon, conſecrated to Veeſhnu, called *ſalagram*, in which the Hindoos imagine they diſcover nine different ſhades, emblematical of his nine incarnations. It is found in the river of Caſi, a branch of the Ganges, is very heavy, oval or circular in its form, and in colour it is ſometimes black and ſometimes violet. Only a ſmall cavity appears on the outſide, but within it is hollow, and almoſt concave, being furniſhed in the interior coats above and below with ſpiral lines, which terminate in a point towards the centre. The ſuperſtitious Brahmins ſay, that they are formed by a ſmall worm, which, working its way in the ſtone, prepares in its boſom a habitation for Veeſhnu. Some of them find in theſe ſpiral lines the figure of his chacra.

Theſe

* 1 Theſſ. iv. 16.

Thefe ftones are very rare and coftly: when they are quite black, and reprefent the gracious transformations of Veefhnu, efpecially under that of Creefhna, a Sanfcreet name fignifying *black*, they are ineftimable; but, when they are tinged with violet, and reprefent his angry incarnations, as under the form of a man-lion, or the Rama-Avatars, they are of lefs value; indeed, if M. Sonnerat may be credited, in that cafe, no common follower of the god dares to keep them in his houfe: the Sanaiaffis alone, whofe rigid penances have more fublimed their piety, are bold enough to carry them, and to pay them their daily homage.

The Salagram is pioufly preferved in the temples of the Veefhnuvites, and is to them what the Lingam is to the Seevites. The ceremonies performed to thefe ftones are nearly fimilar: they are equally borne about, as fomewhat fuperlatively precious, in the pureft white linen: they are wafhed every morning, anointed with oils, perfumed, and folemnly placed on the altar during divine worfhip, and happy are thofe favoured devotees who can quaff the fanctified water in which either has been bathed.

Let

Let us return to the conſideration of the other ſuperſtitions practiſed during the continuance of the Pooja. We have deſcribed the general appearance of the pagoda, on the firſt entrance, as that of a gloomy and polluted dungeon. The Pooja, however, no ſooner commences, than the ſhades of darkneſs are turned to meridian ſplendor, from the numerous lamps offered in devotion, blazing with conſecrated butter, and a thouſand rich perfumes, mingling their various odours in the air, annihilate the diſguſting ſmell of ſmoke and greaſe. Meanwhile, to the ſound of the holy bell and the blown conch, ſucceeds the noiſe of cymbals and tabors, beaten by the Bayaderes, or dancing-girls, in the court of the pagoda, to the ſound of their exquiſitely-melodious voices, and in perfect uniſon with the little golden bells that ornament their feet, and vibrate as they move.

I have before deſcribed* the education, habits, and accompliſhments, of the Bayaderes; I have likewiſe intimated the marked reſemblance exiſting between their unhappy practices and thoſe of the proſtitutes that thronged the porches of the Dea Syria, or Babylonian Venus. To trace this cuſtom to its ſource, it

* Theological Diſſert. vol. ii. p. 306.

it is neceſſary that we ſhould again revert to the rites of that goddeſs; and that we deeper inveſtigate her myſteries, which equally outraged decency and order, and which, uniting to, or rather congenial with, the baſe Hammonian idolatries, firſt contaminated the purer patriarchal theology prevalent in Aſia.

One of the moſt curious and valuable tracts of a theological kind that have come down to us from the ancients, is the famous treatiſe of Lucian de Dea Syria. The genius of that writer could aſſume any form, and if, in ſome inſtances, he was the *banterer* of the Pagan religion, he was, in others, the grave *hiſtorian* of its moſt ancient and venerable rites. In the treatiſe alluded to, there appears ſo different a ſpirit from that which animates his comic poetical eſſays, there are ſuch evident marks of credulous ſuperſtition, as to have induced ſome modern writers of credit to ſuppoſe him not to have been the author of it; a matter, however, which is too well atteſted to admit of a ſerious doubt. That treatiſe is more peculiarly valuable, becauſe it contains an accurate detail of the ſuperſtitious rites celebrated in the moſt ancient periods, and in the moſt renowned Pagan temples of the world; I mean thoſe of Aſſyria, and the Venus

Urania

Urania juſt mentioned. To the ſhort account given from Herodotus, in a former page, of the impure myſteries of the worſhip of this Uranian Venus, in regard to their public proſtitution, I might have added, that, *poſſibly*, in Syria, was to be found the genuine origin both of the Indian and Egyptian Phallic worſhip; for, according to this author, at the very entrance of this moſt ancient ſhrine, on each ſide of the portal, were conſpicuouſly placed two enormous ſtone pillars, the uſual ſymbols of that worſhip, on which an inſcription informed the worſhippers, that Bacchus, the Indian Rama, who was the ſon of Cuſh, had conſecrated thoſe Phallic pillars to Juno; that is, I ſuppoſe, to Juno, under the uſeful and important character of Lucina, in which ſhe preſided over child-birth. The part of this tract to which I wiſh, at preſent, to call the reader's attention, is that in which Lucian acquaints us that the moſt ſolemn feaſt obſerved by the ancient Syrians was celebrated at the vernal equinox, and it was denominated THE FEAST OF FIRE. It was holden at Hierapolis, or *the ſacred city*, and thither, not only the inhabitants of Syria, but thoſe of all the adjoining empires, Arabia, Phœnicia, and Babylon, in crowds reſorted, bearing with them

the idols worſhipped in their reſpective countries, probably in token of ſubordination and reſpect to the ſuperior Deity. At this feſtivity, every Bacchanalian extravagance was publicly allowed and encouraged; whole hecatombs of various animals were ſacrificed, while the moſt precious gums and the moſt fragrant woods fed, day and night, the vaſt column of flame that continually aſcended from the altar.

Every extreme of licentious mirth was then publicly allowed of, and even encouraged. The prieſts of the laſcivious goddeſs, whom, underſtood in a mythological point of view, I cannot but conſider as a perſonification of Nature wantoning in her lovelieſt prime, and arrayed in the beauty of the blooming ſpring, were tranſported with a divine fury, and ſome of them mutually ſcourged and wounded each other: others loudly ſmote the ſacred inſtruments of muſic, and chanted forth prophetic hymns, accordant with their ſonorous melody: but, what is remarkably ſingular at a feſtival that plainly alluded to *nature* and the renovation of her powers, ſome of thoſe unmanly prieſts, if Lucian may be credited, indecently arrayed themſelves in female attire, ſubmitting to the degradation of the emaſ-

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culating knife, and facrificed to their protectrefs, not the fymbolical, but the real, Phallus.* This practice can only be accounted for, either by that ancient maxim of fuperftition, that whatfoever is moft facredly precious to mankind fhould be confecrated to the gods, and that we pleafe him beft when we make the moft coftly facrifice; by fuppofing that, in the perpetration of an act fo abhorrent from nature, they intended to give public proof of a vow of perpetual virginity; or on account of a particular mythological reafon which fhall immediately be explained.

Thofe mythologifts who confider the Syrian goddefs to be a perfonification of the earth, as Cybele in Greece doubtlefs was, rather than of nature, infift that her eunuch-priefts allude to the barren ftate of that earth without cultivation. When confidered in this point of view, they reprefent the noife of her beaten cymbals, which denote the globe, as allufive to the uproar which the warring winds, waters, and fubterraneous fires, confined in its cavities, occafion, and which, convulfing its internal regions, produce earthquakes and volcanic eruptions; and the rattling of her brazen fiftra they underftand as figurative of the

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* Lucian de Dea Syria, p. 87.

clashing of the various instruments used in husbandry, which were composed of brass before iron was invented. It is indeed a principal object with Lucian in this treatise to demonstrate that the Rhea of Greece was the Dea Syria of the Babylonians; and he is doubtless right, since the very same species of worship, and the use of the very same instruments, have immemorially prevailed in India. His hypothesis, if admitted, only exhibits still more glaring proof how universally throughout the Pagan world a system of gross physics prevailed, and the earth was adored instead of its Creator.

I am still, however, inclined to the opinion of other mythologists who consider this celebrated deity in the most extensive view of her character, as *universal nature* herself, which includes not only the earth, but the whole circle of being; and though, when understood in this point of view, the mutilation of her priests may appear somewhat singular, there was another custom practised in her temple very consonant to this character, the consideration of which brings us back to the dancing-girls of India, who, we observed, are *public prostitutes*, and are denominated *women of the idol*. This custom, recorded with ex-

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preſſions of juſt indignation by Herodotus,* was, that all female votaries of this deity, once at leaſt in their lives, ſhould proſtitute themſelves to ſome ſtranger in the polluted porches of this temple. It had, ſays that hiſtorian, for this infamous purpoſe, a long range of galleries open on every ſide, that the paſſing ſtranger might more freely view the aſſembled fair, thus devoutly frail, and make his choice with unreſtrained freedom. For the object of his choice he did not, like the proud ſultan, throw the handkerchief of love, but a piece of ſilver coin, into her lap, which the ſevere laws of the country forbade her to refuſe, as well as his embrace, however diſguſting might be her lover. The wages of iniquity, thus menially obtained, were accounted *holy*, and were devoted to increaſe the treaſures of this temple. Every female in that diſtrict without exception, the noble as well as ignoble, the princeſs and the peaſant's wife, were alike obliged to go through this indiſpenſable ceremony of *initiation* into the myſteries of Mylitta, with this difference only, that women of diſtinguiſhed rank, with a numerous train of ſervants attending at ſome little diſtance, no doubt with the politic in-

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* Herodot. lib. i. p. 60.

tention to overawe any intruder of mean parentage from approaching the ſhrine of princely beauty, took their ſtation in covered chariots at the gate. Such were the rites of the Syrian goddeſs; and the reader, by comparing the account with that of the Bayaderes in a preceding page, will find that the devotees of India are by no means behind thoſe of Syria in the duty of ſacrificing at the ſhrine of nature, either at the vernal or autumnal equinox.

Cybele then, the mother of the gods, that is, the fruitful parent of all the Pagan theology, if Lucian may be credited, is no other than the Dea Syria. She is ſaid to have invented the tympanum, or ſmall drum, which ſhe conſtantly carries in her hands, and Varro has told us, that, by that tympanum, the globe of the earth is deſignated, of which ſhe was thought to be the animating principle. If that aſſertion be true, we cannot wonder at the conſtant uſe of it in the devotion of India, and it is a ſtrong additional proof from what central country that devotion originally came, as well as to whom it has immediate reference; whether ſhe be, in fact, the Indian Lachſmi, the goddeſs of abundance, or Bhavani, the ſofter deity who preſides over love and generation.

tion. In the frantic dance before her altars, pipes, or flutes, alſo, and tabors, formed a part of the ſacred concert. In regard to the firſt of theſe inſtruments, I have only to remark, that, in moſt of the engravings of Veeſhnu, in the form of Creeſhna, that god is repreſented playing to the enamoured Gopias, or milk-maids of Mathura, on this melodious paſtoral inſtrument, a proof of the great antiquity of its uſe in India, and its invention is attributed to Hanumat, the Hindoo Pan, a famous general of the great Rama, who conquered the world with an army of ſatyrs. Now Hanumat was the ſon of Pavan, the Indian god of the winds,* and ſeems to have been well calculated, from this mythological birth, to become the inventor of muſical modes and paſtoral airs. The ſimilarity of ſound between the names Pavan and Pan might incline us to believe they both mean the ſame deity, that deity, *qui primus* (Pan) *calamos conjungere plures inſtituit.* A figure of the VÍNA, or Indian guitar, engraved in the Aſiatic Reſearches, with ſome remarks upon its antiquity which accompany that engraving, demonſtrate how early and aſſiduouſly the ancient Indians cultivated muſic: indeed, at the

* Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 258.

ancient period in which the Vedas were written, they muſt have had conſiderable ſkill in that ſcience; for, like many parts of the Jewiſh ſcriptures, they are written in a kind of metre, as if meant to be ſung, and accompanied with inſtruments; and, when properly read, I underſtand, they are chanted after the ſame manner as the Jewiſh ſcriptures in the ſynagogues are chanted to this day. With reſpect to the tabor, the immemorial uſe of this inſtrument in India is proved by the circumſtance of two of the manſions of the moon, in the Lunar Zodiac, being deſignated with this aſteriſm, and very properly uſed they are to mark the nightly ſtages of that planetary deity, in whoſe feſtivals of the Νεομηνια, throughout every nation of the ancient world, the cheerful ſound of the tabor gave energy and animation to the midnight dance. The ſacred dance itſelf, of ancient periods, muſt now form the ſubject of extenſive conſideration.

Immoderate joy and pleaſure naturally ſhew themſelves in the air and geſtures of the perſon affected by ſuch ſenſations. His eye gliſtens, his cheek is fluſhed with crimſon, and his feet ſpontaneouſly bound in accordance with the increaſed contraction and dilatation of

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his palpitating heart. When religious fervour adds its ftimulus to the excited paffions, the tranfport is greater, in proportion to the fublimer nature of the object, and the more animating profpect which celeftial hope and infpiration unfold to the intellectual view.

Superftition ftill heightens every colour, dazzles us with a falfe glare, and inflames the ardour of zeal to mental intoxication and phrenzy. Of the truth of the firft affertion in the common concerns of life, we meet with daily and ftriking proof. Of the fecond, we have a memorable inftance in David's laying by the majefty of the monarch, and dancing in holy triumph and ecftafy before the ark, reftored, after a long abfence, to defponding Ifrael. Of the third, the rites of Mylitta at Babylon, the ravings of the furious prieftefs of Apollo at Delphi, and the Bacchic revels, are irrefragable teftimonies. Befides thefe, however, there exifted in antiquity a folemn and meafured dance, more particularly inftituted by the aftronomical priefts, which imitated the motion of the fun and planets in their refpective orbits. This dance was divided into three parts, the *ftrophe*, the *antiftrophe*, and that which was called *ftationary*, or flow and fcarcely perceptible motion before the altar.

altar. According to an ancient author, *antiqui deorum laudes carminibus comprehenſas circum aras eorum euntes canebant: cujus primum ambitum quem ingrediebantur ex parte dextra* στροφην *vocabant: reverſionem autem ſiniſtrorſum factam completo priore orbe* αντιστροφην *appellabant. Dein in conſpectu deorum ſoliti* conſiſtere, *cantici reliqua conſequebantur, appellantes id Epodon.** In the ſtrophe, they danced from the right hand to the left, by which motion, Plutarch is of opinion, they meant to indicate the apparent motion of the heavens, from eaſt to weſt. In the antiſtrophe, they moved from the left to the right, an alluſion to the motion of the planets, from weſt to eaſt; and, by the ſlow, or ſtationary, motion before the altar, the permanent ſtability of the earth. It was in the laſt ſituation that the ἐπωδη, or *ode after the dance*, was ſung. I cannot, however, help being of opinion, that the ancients knew ſomething more of the true ſyſtem of aſtronomy than this, and that, by the ſlow ſtationary, or hardly-perceptible, motion before the altar, they intended to denote either the revolution of the earth upon its axis, or elſe the *ſolſtitial period*; for, it is ſcarcely poſſible they could be acquainted with the revolution

* Vide Marius Victorinus, lib. i. p. 74.

tion of the ſun (whoſe motions, I believe, they meant principally to repreſent) upon its own axis.

From another curious treatiſe of Lucian, expreſſly written upon this ſubject of the ancient dances, I have, in the preface to this work, mentioned his account of the circular dance, uſed by the Indians when they paid their adorations to the SUN.

The dance alluded to is undoubtedly that practiſed on the grand annual feſtival, holden in India, in honour of Veeſhnu, in the form of Creeſhna. It is called the Raas Jattra, literally the *dance of the circle*, and the following account of it may be found in Mr. Holwell, on the Hindoo faſts and feſtivals. Creeſhna is the Indian Apollo, and the exploits of this deity on the hallowed plains of Mathura will engroſs a very large portion of the ancient Indian hiſtory. This feaſt, Mr. Holwell informs us, falls on the full moon in October, and is univerſally obſerved throughout Hindoſtan; but in a moſt extraordinary manner at Bindoobund, in commemoration of a miraculous event, which is fabled to have happened in the neighbourhood of that place. A number of virgins having aſſembled to celebrate in mirth and ſport the deſcent of Creeſhna,

Creeſhna, in the height of their joy, the god himſelf appeared among them, and propoſed *a dance* to the jocund fair. They objected the want of partners with whom to form that dance; but Creeſhna obviated the objection, by dividing himſelf (his rays) into as many portions as there were virgins, and thus every nymph had a Creeſhna to attend her in the circular dance. Mr. Holwell, the writer of this account, has illuſtrated his narration by an engraving, and, whether by accident or deſign I cannot ſay, but the number of the virgins thus engaged is exactly *ſeven*, the number of the planets, while the radiant god himſelf ſtands in an eaſy, diſengaged, attitude in the centre of the engraved table.* Thus early did the people of India know, and endeavour to repreſent, the harmonious dance of the planets; and, having intimated that dance, we cannot wonder at their attempting to imitate alſo, while it was performing, the imagined muſic of the ſpheres.

Although neither muſical inſtruments nor dancing are particularly ordained in the Levitical law to be employed by the Hebrews in religious worſhip, there can be little doubt of both having been very anciently in uſe among them.

* See Holwell's Indian Feſtivals, part ii. p. 132.

them. A very early inſtance of it we find almoſt immediately after their exodus from Egypt; for, after Moſes and the children of Iſrael had finiſhed ſinging that ſublime ſong, which he compoſed upon the miraculous overthrow of Pharoah, we are told, that *Miriam, the propheteſs, the ſiſter of Aaron, took a* TIMBREL *in her hand; and all the women went out after her with* TIMBRELS *and with* DANCES.* It is impoſſible to conſider this band otherwiſe than as a ſacred chorus of dancing-women, differing only from the Indian women, as being ſtrictly and exemplarily virtuous, with the prieſteſs or propheteſs at their head, the leader of that band. Their ſong, indeed, was truly ſacred, being in honour of the Omnipotent Jehovah himſelf; ſince *Miriam anſwered them, ſing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed glorioſly: the horſe and his rider hath he thrown into the ſea.*† And this, perhaps, was the firſt conſecration in the world of the meaſured ſtep and the triumphant ſong to the true God. Too ſwiftly, alas! and deeply were they diſhonoured, when, forgetting their true Deliverer, this infatuated progeny afterwards proſtrated themſelves, in idolatrous worſhip, before the golden calf, the ſymbol of Oſiris,

* Exodus, xv. 20.   † Ibid.

Osiris, and began to dance and sing around the altar of that base Egyptian deity. In the succeeding periods of their empire, during the national festivities, we read of the hallowed dance to the sound of sacred music constantly taking place. When the ark was brought back from Kirjath-Jarim to Jerusalem *the singers went before*, (conjuncti psallentibus, reads the Æthiopic version,) *the players on instruments followed after*; (that is, with steps modulated to the music of those instruments;) *among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.* Psalm lxviii. 25. David seems from his youth to have been devoted to music, and greatly multiplied the musicians and singers employed in religious service. Most of those beautiful and pathetic compositions, which we call the Psalms, were the productions of that monarch's genius and piety united. The titles prefixed to them shew them to be addressed to the different presidents of the bands of musicians, to be set to the different instruments of which they respectively had the charge; and those bands, we are told, amounted to twenty-four in number. When Solomon erected his most magnificent temple, the pomp and splendour of the public worship at Jerusalem were vastly increased, and the musical

ſical eſtabliſhments inſtituted by David were conſiderably enlarged. There were, on the whole, no leſs than four-and-twenty thouſand Levites, who had offices aſſigned them in that ſuperb temple. Four thouſand of theſe were appointed to the function of public ſingers, who, aiding with their numerous voices the loud JUBAL, or great Hebrew trumpet, and the ſolemn HASUR, or inſtrument of ten ſtrings, contributed on grand occaſions to ſwell the pomp of the Hebrew devotion, and raiſe it to a point of exaltation and diſtinction among the nations, in ſome degree correſpondent to the ſuperior majeſty and purity of the God they adored. Hence, when that temple was deſtroyed, and the Jewiſh nation carried away captive to Babylon, originated thoſe repeated taunts thrown out by their inſulting victors, *Sing us one of the ſongs of Zion!* Pſalm cxxxvii. 3. The deſponding ſons of Judah, however, are beautifully deſcribed in the Pſalm juſt cited, as having hung the neglected KINNOR, or harp of Paleſtine, on the willows that grow plentifully on the banks of the Euphrates, and as pathetically exclaiming, *How can we ſing the ſong of Jehovah in the land of ſtrangers?* Even when groaning under the chains of their captivity,

they

they ſeem not to have entirely neglected that faſcinating ſcience which David had ſo zealouſly promoted among them, and Solomon had ſo conſiderably improved; for, in the liſt which is given by Ezra of thoſe who returned with him from Babylon, there are numbered *two hundred ſinging-men and ſinging-women.* Ezra, ii. 65. The principal difference between the Jewiſh dancing-women, and thoſe employed in the Aſſyrian, Egyptian, and Indian, temples, conſiſts, as has been intimated before, in the immaculate and virgin purity of the former, and the licentious, and even libidinous, character of the latter. That difference is to be explained by an inveſtigation into the nature and attributes of the deities reſpectively adored in thoſe countries. The gods of the latter were groſs phyſical deities, nature and its various powers perſonified. The ſublime object of the adoration of the Hebrews was THE GOD OF NATURE HIMSELF.

The account which a recent traveller, M. Savary, gives of the preſent Almai, or dancing-girls of Egypt, is very curious, and highly deſerving attention, becauſe in manners and habits they exactly correſpond with thoſe of India. It is in the fourteenth letter of his firſt volume on Egypt, and I ſhall trouble the

the reader with a pretty confiderable extract from it.

" The Almai," fays M. Savary, " form a clafs very famous in this country, to be admitted into which it is neceffary to poffefs beauty, a fine voice, eloquence, and be able to compofe and fing extempore verfes, adapted to the occafion. The Almai know all new fongs by rote, their memory is ftored with the beft funeral and love fongs, they are prefent at all feftivals, and are the chief ornament of banquets. They place them in a raifed orcheftra, or pulpit, where they fing during the feaft: after which they defcend, and form dances, which no way refemble ours. They are pantomimes that reprefent the common incidents of life. Love is their ufual fubject. The fupplenefs of thefe dancers' bodies is inconceivable, and the flexibility of their features, which take impreffions characteriftic of the parts they play at will, aftonifhing. The indecency, however, of their attitudes is often exceffive; each look, each gefture, fpeaks, and in a manner fo forcible as not poffibly to be mifunderftood. They throw afide modefty with their veils. When they begin to dance, a long and very light filk robe floats on the ground; negligently girded by a fafh; long black hair

 perfumed,

perfumed, and in treſſes, deſcends over their ſhoulders; the ſhift, tranſparent as gauze, ſcarcely conceals the ſkin. As the action proceeds, the various forms and contours the body can aſſume ſeem progreſſive; the ſound of the flute, the caſtanets, the tambour de baſque, and cymbals, regulate, increaſe, or ſlacken, their ſteps. Words, adapted to ſuch like ſcenes, inflame them more, till they appear intoxicated, and become frantic Bacchantes. Forgetting all reſerve, they then wholly abandon themſelves to the diſorder of their ſenſes, while an indelicate people, who wiſh nothing ſhould be left to the imagination, redouble their applauſe.

"Theſe Almai are admitted into all harams; they teach the women the new airs, recount amorous tales, and recite poems, in their preſence, which are intereſting, by being pictures of their own manners. They teach them the myſteries of their art, and inſtruct them in laſcivious dances. The minds of theſe women are cultivated, their converſation agreeable; they ſpeak their language with purity, and, habitually addicting themſelves to poetry, learn the moſt winning and ſonorous modes of expreſſion. Their recital is very graceful: when they ſing, nature is their only guide: ſome of the

the airs I have heard from them were gay, and in a light and lively meaſure, like ſome of ours; but their excellence is moſt ſeen in the pathetic. When they rehearſe a moal, in the manner of the ancient tragic ballad, by dwelling upon affecting and plaintive tones, they inſpire melancholy, which inſenſibly augments till it melts in tears. The very Turks, enemies as they are to the arts, the Turks themſelves, paſs whole nights in liſtening to them. Two people ſing together ſometimes, but, like their orcheſtra, they are always in uniſon: accompaniments in muſic are only for enlightened nations; who, while melody charms the ear, wiſh to have the mind employed by a juſt and inventive modulation. Nations, on the contrary, whoſe feelings are oftener appealed to than their underſtanding, little capable of catching the fleeting beauties of harmony, delight in thoſe ſimple ſounds which immediately attack the heart, without calling in the aid of reflection to increaſe ſenſibility."

The Iſraelites, to whom Egyptian manners, by their long dwelling in Egypt, were become natural, alſo had their Almai. At Jeruſalem, as at Cairo, women were taught to move in graceful meaſure. St. Mark relates a fact which proves

the power of the Oriental dance over the heart of man.

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and chief eſtates of Galilee;

And when the daughter of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced, and pleaſed Herod, and them that ſat with him, the king ſaid unto the damſel, Aſk of me whatſoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

And he ſware unto her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt aſk of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

And ſhe went forth, and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall I aſk? and ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt.

And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the king, and aſked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by and by the head of John the Baptiſt.

And immediately the king ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought; and he went and beheaded him in the priſon.

It may, I think, be depended upon, that the anceſtors of theſe Almai had their parts aſſigned them in the ancient religious feſtivals of Egypt; the flutes, the tambours, and the cymbals, were the very inſtruments uſed in the rites of Iſis. When thoſe rites were imported

ported into Greece, and Ceres uſurped the honours of Iſis, the Greeks carried the ſacred as well as the ſocial dance to the higheſt point of attainable perfection. They made uſe of the varied dance, not only to animate devotion, but to excite valour and terrify guilt. The Pyrrhic dance of the Spartans was performed by youths armed cap-a-pee, who brandiſhed aloft their ſwords and darted their javelins to the ſound of martial muſic. It is unneceſſary, in this place, to enter into any particular account of the frantic revels of the Bacchantes, during the dance ſacred to their feſtive deity; when his votaries of both ſexes reſigned themſelves to boundleſs licentiouſneſs; when wildly toſſing about their thyrſi, with their hair diſhevelled and furious geſticulation, they ruſhed, by torch-light, through the ſtreets, committing every ſpecies of mirthful extravagance, and making the capital of Greece reſound with thundering acclamations of Ευοι Βακχε! The dance of the Eumenides, or Furies, on the ſtage of Athens, was not leſs frantic, but impreſſed a different ſentiment; that of irreſiſtible terror. The minds of the aſtoniſhed ſpectators were agitated with a dreadful alternation of paſſion; rage, anguiſh, and diſmay. The valiant veteran, who had a

 thouſand

thousand times braved death in the field of battle, trembled while it was performing. A great part of the scared multitude rushed with precipitation from the theatre; and outcries of horror were heard on every side. The remaining audience, who had courage to witness the exhibition, appalled at the scenes which were acting, imagined they saw in earnest those terrific deities, the ministers of eternal justice, armed with the vengeance of heaven, and commissioned to pursue and punish crimes upon earth.

I have already, with as much delicacy as was consistent with perspicuity, informed the reader that Seeva is sometimes represented by emblems that express, in that mythological deity, the union of the two sexes, in which sense he may be called Αρρενοθηλυς, or male and female; an idea, which, it has before been observed, is not peculiar to India, but runs through all the mystic writers of antiquity, and alludes to the productive fecundity, inherent in the divine nature. The glaring symbols of it are too evident in every pagoda of this physical race, and the frequency of them impresses strangers with mistaken notions of their being a people immersed in boundless profligacy of manners, which is by no means

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the caſe. In this, his genial character, Parvati, another term for Bhavani and Durga, is allotted him for a conſort, or, rather, is only one part of himſelf. Under theſe two forms, ſays M. Sonnerat, he is adored by the name of Parachiven and Paraſati. In ſome temples theſe two figures are ſeparate; but, in others, they are joined together, and compoſe one figure, half man and half woman. The principal temple of Seeva, under this combined image, is at Tirounomaley.

In forming theſe conceptions, and in combining theſe images, I am ready to admit that mythology has had conſiderable influence; yet, am I not without ſtrong ſuſpicion, that the whole of this ANDROGYNOUS ſyſtem is founded upon ſome miſtaken tradition, ſimilar to that occurring in the writings of ſome rabbinical doctors, and founded on a falſe interpretation of a verſe in Geneſis, that God, at the beginning, created man of both ſexes; *male and female created he them.* So far diſtant are the zealous adorers of Seeva, in this capacity, from being of a licentious character, that none of his votaries are doomed to a more rigid purity than theſe: they have all the frozen chaſtity of Atys, the well-beloved of Cybele, with this difference, that they retain

the ability, which Atys wanted, of violating the vow of perpetual virginity. In fact, by the force of ſevere penances and habitual abſtinence, ſome of them entirely vanquiſh the ebullition of natural deſire; while others, by deadly ſtupifying drugs, lock up all the ſprings of genial paſſion, and are abſorbed in holy inſenſibility. The neceſſity for their arriving at this ſtate of invincible apathy muſt be evident to thoſe who conſider the danger of theſe devotees, who appear conſtantly in public without the ſmalleſt covering, and in whom the leaſt apparent deviation from their profeſſion of entire abſtraction in ſpiritual objects would be conſidered as an unpardonable crime; a crime for which they would be infallibly ſtoned to death by the enraged populace. Theſe people bear the diſguſting but too-expreſſive ſymbol of their god around their neck or faſtened to their arm; and they rub the forehead, breaſt, and ſhoulders, with aſhes of cow-dung. They uſe cow-dung, I preſume, becauſe it is the medium by which the barren ſoil is rendered prolific, and therefore reminds them of the famous Indian doctrine of corruption and re-production. They uſe it burnt to aſhes, becauſe fire is another emblem of Seeva, as a deſtroyer, and it is fire that

that will finally reduce to aſhes "the cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces, the ſolemn temples, the great globe itſelf, and all which it inherit." It is very remarkable that the Aſſyrian Venus, according to Lucian, had alſo offerings of dung placed upon her altars. This cuſtom could only originate in the Galli, her prieſts, conſidering her in the light of the great productive principle in nature perſonified, and connecting with that idea the maxim of the Brahmins, that the apparent deſtruction of an object is only the re-production of it in another form.

Such, ſurveyed in its general feature, is the vaſt, the complicated, ſyſtem of Indian, or rather of Aſiatic, ſuperſtition. If ſome parts of the Brahmin ritual appear to have been blended with thoſe adopted by the Jews, the difficulty can only be ſolved by one or other of the following ſuppoſitions; either, that, in the grand primeval theology of the venerable patriarchs, there were certain myſterious rites and hallowed ſymbols univerſally prevalent, the uſe of which has deſcended to their poſterity, ſettled in the various regions of Aſia, and retained among others by the progeny of the faithful Abraham; or elſe, that the ſupreme Deity, in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs

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of the Jews, and the predilection which they had unhappily formed in Egypt for the religious habits and ritual of that country, thought proper to indulge his favoured race in the adoption of a few of the moſt innocent of the Gentile ceremonies. The former of theſe ſuppoſitions is by far the moſt agreeable to the hypotheſis on which this book proceeds, and is by far the moſt conſonant to the jealous honour of the God of Iſrael. After all, we muſt own, with Calmet, that the temple of the great Jehovah had many decorations ſimilar to thoſe in the hallowed temples of Aſia. He was ſerved there, ſays the laſt-cited author, with all the pomp and ſplendor of an Eaſtern monarch. He had his table, his perfumes, his throne, his bed-chamber, his officers, his ſinging-men, and his ſinging-women.*

* See Calmet's Critical Diſſertations on the Hebrew Muſic, p. 49. Quarto, 1727.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER III.

From general Description the Author enters on minuter Details relative to the Indian POOJA, *or Sacrifice.—A concise Chapter on the Subject from* SONNERAT.—*Extracts from the Ayeen Akbery.—Commutations of gold and silver Utensils allowed instead of sanguinary Sacrifices of Men and Beasts.—Those Sacrifices, however, still in a Degree prevail, which introduces the Subject of the* PENANCES *of the Hindoos.—The excruciating Severites submitted to in the Course of the* CHAR-ASHERUM, *or Four Degrees of Probation, during Initiation into the Indian Mysteries, detailed and compared with those undergone in the Mysteries of Mithra in Persia and at Eleusis.*

THE general view previously exhibited of the rites practised in the Indian temples will prove a proper introduction to the peculiar ceremonies of the smaller distinct Poojas, which are numerous and varied according to the character and attributes of the Deity adored. Sonnerat has given an entire but

but concise chapter, in which the principal of these ceremonies are enumerated and described. As that author is not in the hands of every body, and was an eye-witness to the scenes which he relates, I shall present my readers with it entire, as it stands in the Calcutta edition of his voyage, without presuming to make any other alteration in it than the occasional one of a proper name, to render it more consonant to my own orthography, in which, throughout this work, I have endeavoured, as closely as possible, to follow Mr. Wilkins.

Of the different Ceremonies used in the Indian Poojas.

"Under the name of Pooja," says M. Sonnerat, "all the ceremonies, which the different deities daily exact, are comprehended. They consist in bathing the god with water and milk, anointing him with butter and odoriferous oils, covering him with rich clothes, and loading him with jewels, which they change every day, as well as the other ornaments, when the pagoda is opulent. They also present him with lamps, where butter is used

ufed inftead of oil; and throw to him flowers of a particular fort, which are confecrated to him feparately, one after another: the number they throw is fixed in their facred books. During the whole time of the ceremony, the dancers move in meafured fteps before his ftatue to the found of inftruments. A part of the Brahmins, with chouries of white hair, or peacocks' feathers, keep off the infects, while the reft are employed in prefenting him the offerings; for, the Indians never come empty-handed to the temple. They bring *ad libitum* rice, camphire, butter, flowers, and fruit. When they have none of thefe, the Brahmins give them flowers, of which they have always bafkets ready; and, after they have received payment, they offer them to the god in the name of the worfhippers. It belongs to the Brahmins alone to make the Pooja in particular houfes, becaufe the divinity muft be prefent, and they alone have the right of making him defcend on the earth. On certain feftivals of the year, all the Indians are obliged to perform this ceremony, which confifts in making offerings and a facrifice to God. For this purpofe the Brahmin prepares a place which is purified with dried cow-dung, with which the pavement is plaftered; and the room

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is ſprinkled with the urine of the ſame animal. A vaſe full of water, covered, is placed in the middle of the room, round with they light lamps filled with butter. When every thing is ready, the Brahmin, ſitting on the ground with his head uncovered, recites prayers, and from time to time flings flowers and rice upon the vaſe: when the invocations are finiſhed, the god ſhould be found in the vaſe. They then make him offerings in which they are intereſted; for, they preſent him with that which they deſire the year may return to them a hundred fold, ſuch as fruits, rice, and beetel, but no money. The Brahmin afterwards makes the ſacrifice, which conſiſts in burning ſeveral pieces of wood before the vaſe, which he only has the right to throw into the fire, one after another, and at thoſe moments which are engaged during the prayer he recites. After this ceremony, the Brahmin takes his leave of the deity with another prayer.

OF DIBARADANÉ.

The Dibaradané, or offering of fire, is alſo a daily ceremony in honour of the gods, and makes part of the Pooja. The Brahmin who officiates

officiates holds in one hand a ſmall bell, which he ſounds; and, in the other, a copper lamp full of butter: he makes it paſs and repaſs round the ſtatue of the god he worſhips. During this time, the Bayaderes dance and ſing his praiſes; after which, the aſſiſtants in contemplation, with hands joined, addreſs their vows to the idol. The Brahmin then breaks the garland with which the idol is adorned, diſtributes the fragments to the people, and receives from them the offerings they have brought to the divinity.

OF THE ABICHEGAM.

The Abichegam makes a part of the Pooja: this ceremony conſiſts in pouring milk on the Lingam. This liquor is afterwards kept with great care, and ſome drops are given to dying people, that they may merit the delights of the Calaiſſon. We find traces of the Abichegam in the earlieſt antiquity. The primitive race of men had a kind of ſacrifice called Libation, which was made in pouring out ſome liquor, but eſpecially oil, in honour of the divinity. It was alſo ordained in the written law.

The Indians have preferved this cuftom, not only in refpect to the Lingam, but alfo in honour of their other deities. They actually offer them libations, wafh them with cocoa-nut-oil, melted butter, or water of the Ganges. They always rub them with oil or butter when they addrefs prayers or prefent offerings to them; fo that all their idols are black, fmoked, plaftered, and foiled with a fetid greafe.

OF SANDIVANE.

The Sandivane is a ceremony which the Brahmins alone make daily to the gods in general; and, in the morning, particularly, to Brahma, as the author of their origin. At fun-rife, they go and take water out of a tank, with the hollow of their hand, which they throw fometimes before and fometimes behind them, and over their fhoulders, invoking Brahma, and pronouncing his praifes; by which they are purified and made worthy of his favours. They afterwards throw water to the fun, to teftify their thanks and their refpect, that he has had the goodnefs to appear and chafe away the fhades of darknefs: they then finifh purifying themfelves by bathing.

bathing. This kind of worſhip was eſtabliſhed, in honour of the great Creator of all things, by the firſt race of mortals, and the Indians have always inviolably adhered to it.*

OF DARPENON.

The Darpenon is inſtituted in honour of the dead. The Indians, after having purified themſelves by bathing, ſit down before a Brahmin, who recites prayers: when the Brahmin has finiſhed praying, he pours water with a ſmall copper vaſe called chimbou, into one of their hands, which they preſent to him open and leaning towards him; he then throws, on the ſame hand, leaves of the plant herbé and grains of gengely, naming the perſons for whom he prays. Theſe prayers are made to Dewtahs, who are protectors of the dead.

* The ancient prieſts of Egypt in like manner purified themſelves by bathing in the morning, and plunging into the ſacred waters of the Nile. A worſhip they might have received from the Indians.

OF NAGAPOOJA.

The term Nagapooja ſignifies worſhip of the ſnake: women are commonly charged with this ceremony. On certain days of the year, when they chooſe to perform it, they go to the banks of thoſe tanks where the Arichi and Margoſier grow: they place under theſe trees a ſtone figure, repreſenting a Lingam between two ſnakes: they bathe themſelves, and, after ablution, they waſh the Lingam, and burn before it ſome pieces of wood particularly aſſigned for this ſacrifice, throw flowers upon it, and aſk of it riches, a numerous poſterity, and a long life to their huſbands. It is ſaid in the Saſtras, that when the ceremony of Nagapooja is made according to the form preſcribed, what is aſked is always obtained.* When they have finiſhed their prayers, they leave the ſtone on the place, never carrying it back to the houſe: it ſerves for the ſame uſe to all women who find it. If there is neither Arichi or Margoſier on the bank of the tank, they carry a branch of each of

* However whimſical this worſhip may appear, we ſee it eſtabliſhed among all the ancients; and the moderns have enlarged upon them.

of theſe trees, which they plant for the ceremony on each ſide of the Lingam, and make a canopy over it. The Indians look upon the Arichi as the male, and the Margoſier as the female; though theſe trees are of a very different ſpecies from each other."*

This account of M. Sonnerat, however accurate, is by no means ſufficiently comprehenſive. The general Pooja is ſtill more minutely deſcribed, with all the accompanying circumſtances, in the Ayeen Akbery, and in the following terms, which too forcibly demonſtrate how abject a ſlave to ſuperſtition is the Brahmin devotee.

Since the Hindoos admit, obſerves the miniſter of Akber, that the Almighty occaſionally aſſumes an elementary form, without defiling his holineſs, they make various idols, in gold and other metals, which ſerve to aſſiſt their imaginations while they offer up their prayers to the inviſible Deity: this they call Pooja, and divide it into *ſixteen* ceremonies. After the devotee has performed his uſual and indiſpenſable ablutions with the Sindehya and Howm, he ſits down, looking towards the *eaſt* or the *north*, with his legs drawn up in front. Then, taking in his hand a little water and

 rice,

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 163. Calcutta edit.

rice, he ſprinkles the idol, and conceives this act to be a proper preface to the commencement of his adoration. Next follows the *Kulſh Pooja*, in which he worſhips the idol's flaggon. Then ſucceeds the *Chankh Pooja*, or the worſhip of the conch-ſhell. Laſt in order is performed the *Ghunta Pooja*, which conſiſts in plaſtering the bell with aſhes of ſandal-wood. When he has finiſhed theſe Poojas, he throws down a little rice, and wiſhes that his God may be manifeſted. Theſe various duties are all comprized in the firſt of the ſixteen ceremonies. In the ſecond, he prepares and places a table of metal, either gold, ſilver, or copper, as a ſeat or throne for the Deity. In the third, he throws water into a veſſel to waſh his footſteps; for, in Hindoſtan, it is the cuſtom, that, when a ſuperior enters the houſe of an inferior, he waſhes his feet. In the fourth, he ſprinkles water thrice, to repreſent the idol rincing his mouth, ſince it is alſo the cuſtom for an inferior to bring to a ſuperior water to rince his mouth with before meals. In the fifth, ſandal, flowers, beetel, and rice, are offered to the idol. In the ſixth, the idol and his throne are carried to another ſpot: then the worſhipper takes in his right hand a white conch-ſhell full of water, which he

he throws over the idol, and with his left hand rings the bell. In the ſeventh, he wipes the idol dry with a cloth, replaces it upon its throne, and adorns it with veſtments of ſilk or gold ſtuff. In the eighth, he puts the zennar upon the idol. In the ninth, he makes the tiluk upon the idol in twelve places. In the tenth, he throws over the idol flowers or green leaves. In the eleventh, he fumigates it with perfumes. In the twelfth, he lights a lamp with ghee. In the thirteenth, he places before the idol trays of food, according to his ability, which are diſtributed amongſt the by-ſtanders, as the holy relics of the idol's banquet. In the fourteenth, he ſtretches himſelf at full length with his face towards the ground, and diſpoſes his body in ſuch a manner, as that his eight members touch the ground, namely, the two knees, two hands, forehead, noſe, and cheeks, and this they call *ſhaſhtang*. Theſe kinds of proſtration are alſo performed to great men in Hindoſtan. In the fifteenth, he makes a circuit around the idol ſeveral times. In the ſixteenth, he ſtands in the poſture of a ſlave, with his hands uplifted, and aſks permiſſion to depart. — There are particular prayers and many different ways uſed in performing theſe ſixteen ceremonies.

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Some believe, that only from the ninth to the thirteenth are indiſpenſable duties. Except a Saniaſſi and a Sooder, all other Hindoos are bound to perform this tedious Pooja thrice every day.

Beſides theſe daily offerings of rice, fruits, and ghee, the Hindoos have their grand national ſacrifices, not very diſſimilar from that of the ſcape-goat among the Hebrews. The reader will find an account of one of theſe ſacrifices extracted from a Sanſcreet book, and inſerted in the Preface to Mr. Halhed's Code. It is called performing the JUGG, literally *the ſacrifice*, and though that of the living horſe and bull, as well as the more impious oblation of human beings, ſo extenſively detailed towards the commencement of this theological Diſſertation, are no longer ſuffered in Hindoſtan; yet have the Brahmins inſtituted an ingenious ſubſtitute, which, without ſtaining the altar with blood, once ſwelled with exhauſtleſs treaſures the coffers of the pagoda. If the expiatory *ſacrifice of a man* for ſome atrocious crime be no longer demanded by the gods, the *weight of a man* in gold and jewels is the only compenſation that can be admitted in lieu of the original. If the milk-white ſteed no longer pours his noble blood on the

altar

altar of the ſun, the radiant deity may yet be appeaſed with a golden horſe. If the immolated bull no longer ſmoke upon the ſacred coals of that altar, and feed at once the ravenous idol and his glutton prieſts, a thouſand cows, with the points of their horns plated with gold and their hoofs ſhod with ſilver, will ſuffice to avert the dreaded calamity which the living ſacrifice was intended to deprecate. This kind of jugg is called DAN, or the giving away of alms to the needy; and of this dan, or pious donation, there are ſixteen kinds enumerated in a ſection of the Ayeen Akbery, a ſection which cannot be omitted becauſe it is one of the moſt curious in the whole book. The immenſe value of theſe oblations, which hiſtory informs us were in ancient times actually and frequently beſtowed on the Brahmins, demonſtrates, as I before had occaſion to remark, that Hindoſtan muſt, before the invaſion of the Mahommedan plunderers, have been far more abundant in bullion and jewels, than it has been at any period ſince that invaſion.

The Pooja called Dan, or pious propitiatory Donations.

There are various methods of performing dan, or pacificatory oblations of bullion and jewels. 1. The devotee weighs himſelf againſt gold, ſilver, and other valuables, and preſents the amount to the Brahmins as an oblation to the gods. 2. An image of Brahma is made with four faces, in each of which are two eyes, two ears, two noſes, and two mouths; it has four hands, and the parts of the body like an ordinary man. It is of gold and ought to weigh not leſs than thirty-three tolahs* and four maſhahs, nor more than 3410 tolahs. The height muſt be ſeventy-two fingers; the breadth forty-eight fingers. This is adorned with jewels, and, after the performance of certain ceremonies, given away in alms. 3. An egg is made of gold divided in two parts, which join together ſo as to make a perfect oval. It muſt not be ſmaller in breadth and height than twelve fingers, nor larger than a hundred

* The tolah, we are informed by Tavernier, a merchant in gold and jewels, is a weight peculiarly appropriated, throughout the Mogul empire, to thoſe precious commodities, and, according to that author, a hundred tolahs amount to thirty-eight ounces.

hundred and ten fingers. The weight muſt be from ſixty-ſix tolahs ſix maſhahs to three thouſand three hundred and thirty-three tolahs four maſhahs. 4. This donation conſiſts of a tree which was one of the fourteen things diſgorged by the ſea in the Courma Avatar. Birds are repreſented ſitting upon the branches. It is made of gold, and muſt not weigh leſs than two tolahs. 5. This conſiſts of one thouſand cows, with the points of their horns plated with gold, and their hoofs with ſilver, with bells and kataſſes about their necks. 6. This conſiſts of a cow and calf, made of gold, weighing from 850 to 3400 tolahs. 7. The ſeventh is a horſe, made of gold, weighing from 10 tolahs to 3333 tolahs four maſhahs. 8. A four-wheeled chariot, made of gold, with four or eight horſes, weighing from 10 tolahs to 6660 tolahs eight maſhahs. 9. A carriage, drawn by four elephants, all of gold, weighing from 16 tolahs to 6660 tolahs eight maſhahs. 10. Four ploughs of gold, of the ſame weight as the laſt article. 11. A repreſentation of a piece of land, with mountains and rivers made of gold, not weighing leſs than 16 tolahs eight maſhahs, nor more than 3333 tolahs. 12. A golden ſphere, weighing from 66

tolahs eight maſhahs to 3333 tolahs four maſhahs. 13. A golden vine, weighing from 16 tolahs to 3333 tolahs four maſhahs. 14. A repreſentation of the ſeven ſeas in gold, weighing from 23 tolahs four maſhahs to 3333 tolahs four maſhahs. 15. A cow and calf made of precious ſtones. 16. A golden figure, with the head of an elephant and the other parts human, weight from 16 tolahs eight maſhahs to 3333 tolahs four maſhahs.

According to ſome Purauns, *toladan* is the only kind that is proper, and none of the others ſhould be leſs than 106 tolahs ſix maſhahs, or more than 833 tolahs four maſhahs. There are alſo different opinions about the manner of diſtribution; ſome Brahmins maintaining that it ought to be firſt given to the ACHAREYA, and by them diſtributed to others. The ACHAREYA are thoſe who teach the Vedas and other ſciences. There are diſtinct ceremonies appointed for each kind of Dan, but it may be beſtowed at any time; although, offerings made during eclipſes, and when the ſun enters the ſign of Capricorn, are eſteemed more eſpecially meritorious. Great rewards are promiſed to thoſe who are charitable; inſomuch, that, for the firſt kind of Dan, when a man gives away his own weight in gold,

gold, he is ordained to remain in Paradiſe for one hundred million kalps, (periods of Brahma,) and, when he re-aſſumes a human form, he will become a mighty monarch.

I now haſten to fulfil my promiſe, ſo often repeated, of detailing the dreadful *preſcribed* penances which the Brahmins undergo in their progreſs through the CHAR ASHERUM, or four Hindoo degrees of probation; and the ſtill more tremendous ſufferings *ſpontaneouſly* inflicted upon themſelves by the Yogees, or devotees of India, to attain a certain and ſpeedy admiſſion into the delights of paradiſe. This deſcription will, in fact, amount to little leſs than the hiſtory of the human ſoul, that æthereal ſpark, as the old philoſophers of Aſia conſidered it, which emaned from the bright central ſource of light and heat; of its various toils and wanderings during its earthly pilgrimage; and its inceſſant and ſtrenuous efforts to re-unite itſelf to that ſource. Nothing can be more intereſting or important than this inquiry. I am about to bring forward, on the great theatre of human tranſaction, agents, who equally brave the dangers of the raging flood and the devouring fire; whoſe courage is not to be ſhaken by the ſharpeſt pangs of torture, or the ap-

proach

proach of death in its moſt ghaſtly and appalling form. On this moſt curious and affecting ſubject, let us take, as a baſis of our diſquiſition, that obſervation of Strabo, which he lays down as the firſt principle of their theology: *τον μεν ἐνθαδε βιϗ, ὡς ἀν ἀκμην κυομενων εἰναι, τον δε θανατον γενεσιν εἰς τον ὀντως βιον*: or, that this preſent life is but the life of embryo-exiſtence, a mere conception; but that death is a generation or birth into TRUE LIFE. The reader will now pleaſe to compare this true repreſentation of Strabo with all the numerous paſſages previouſly extracted by me in the firſt book of the Indian theology from the Geeta, the Heetopades, and the Sacontala, relative to the inceſſant migration of the ſoul, its aſcent through the ſeveral ſpheres, and its ardent deſires after and final abſorption in Brahme, THE SUPREME GOOD. He will likewiſe pardon me, I truſt, for once more bringing to his view the conſequent obſervations upon them, with the circumſtances there enumerated of the peculiar and dreadful ſeverities inflicted on himſelf by the infatuated Yogee, the truth of all which circumſtances I ſhall preſently proceed to prove from the moſt reſpectable authorities.

"From

" From the collective evidence exhibited in the preceding pages, the affertion with which I commenced thefe particular ftrictures on the Metempfychofis, that the profeffed defign of it was to reftore the fallen foul to its priftine ftate of purity and perfection, is proved beyond contradiction. Thus, an interefting and aftonifhing profpect unfolds itfelf to our view. Their facred writings, we fee, reprefent the whole univerfe as an ample and auguft theatre for the probationary exertion of millions of beings, who are fuppofed to be fo many fpirits degraded from the high honours of angelic diftinction, and condemned to afcend, through various gradations of toil and fuffering, until they fhall have reached that exalted fphere of perfection and happinefs, which they enjoyed before their defection. Animated by the defire of obtaining that final boon, and fired by all the glorious promifes of the Vedas, the patient Hindoo fmiles amidft unutterable mifery, and exults in every dire variety of voluntary torture. In the hope of expiating former crimes by adequate penance, and of regaining fpeedily that fancied Elyfium, he binds himfelf to the performance of vows which make human nature fhudder and human reafon ftagger. He paffes whole weeks without

without the ſmalleſt nouriſhment, and whole years in painful vigils. He wanders about naked as he came from the womb of his parent, and ſuffers, without repining, every viciſſitude of heat and cold, of driving ſtorm and beating rain. He ſtands with his arms croſſed above his head, till the ſinews ſhrink and the fleſh withers away. He fixes his eye upon the burning orb of the ſun, till its light be extinguiſhed and its moiſture entirely dried up. It is impoſſible to read the following minute deſcription of one of theſe devotees in the act of ſtationary penance, as given in the Sacontala, without ſhuddering. Every circumſtance enumerated fills the mind with encreaſing horror, and freezes the aſtoniſhed reader to a ſtatue, almoſt as immoveable as the ſuffering penitent. Duſhmanta aſks; "Where is the holy retreat of Maricha?"—Matali *replies*, "A little beyond that grove, where you ſee a pious YOGEE, motionleſs as a pollard, holding his thick buſhy hair, and *fixing his eyes on the ſolar orb.*—Mark, his body *is half covered with a white ant's edifice,* made of raiſed clay; *the ſkin of a ſnake* ſupplies the place of his ſacerdotal thread, and part of it girds his loins; a number of *knotty plants* encircle and wound his neck,

and

and *ſurrounding birds neſts* almoſt cover his ſhoulders."*

From the whole of the preceding ſtatement it muſt be evident to every reader that the Brahmins are no ſtrangers to the doctrine, eſteemed *abſurd* in ſome Chriſtian countries, but admitted by them from time immemorial, that of ORIGINAL SIN. It is their invariable belief that MAN IS A FALLEN CREATURE. Upon this very belief is built the doctrine of the migration of the ſoul through various animal bodies, and revolving BOBUNS, or planetary ſpheres; and I have already endeavoured to prove, that they could only have been united in this uniform belief by ſome ancient, but mutilated, tradition, relative to the defection of man in paradiſe from primeval innocence and virtue.

The doctrine juſt alluded to, as ſo univerſally prevalent in Aſia, that man is a fallen creature, originally gave birth to the perſuaſion, that, by ſevere ſufferings and a long ſeries of probationary diſcipline, the ſoul might be reſtored to its primitive purity. Hence oblations the moſt coſtly, and ſacrifices the moſt ſanguinary, in the hope of propitiating the angry powers, for ever loaded the

* Indian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 283.

the altars of the Pagan deities. They had even ſacrifices denominated thoſe of *regeneration*, and thoſe ſacrifices were always profuſely ſtained with blood. The Taurobolium of the ancients, a ceremony in which the high prieſt of Cybele was conſecrated, was a ceremony of this kind, and might be called a baptiſm of blood, which they conceived imparted a ſpiritual new birth to the liberated ſpirit. In this dreadful and ſanguinary ceremony, according to the poet Prudentius, cited at length by Banier on the ancient ſacrifices, the high prieſt about to be inaugurated was introduced into a dark excavated apartment, adorned with a long ſilken robe and a crown of gold. Above this apartment was a floor perforated in a thouſand places with holes, like a ſieve, through which the blood of a ſacred bull, ſlaughtered for the purpoſe, deſcended in a copious torrent upon the incloſed prieſt, who received the purifying ſtream on every part of his dreſs, rejoicing to bathe with the bloody ſhower his hands, his cheeks, and even to bedew his lips and his tongue, with it. When all the blood had run from the throat of the immolated bull, the carcaſe of the victim was removed, and the prieſt iſſued forth from the cavity a ſpectacle ghaſtly and horrible, his

head

head and veftments being covered with blood, and clotted drops of it adhering to his venerable beard. As foon as the pontifex appeared before the affembled multitude, the air was rent with congratulatory fhouts; fo pure and fo fanctified however was he now efteemed, that they dared not approach his perfon, but beheld him at a diftance with awe and veneration.*

It has been before obferved, that, by thefe initiations, or baptifms of blood, the ancients conceived that they obtained an eternal regeneration, or new birth: nor were they confined to the priefts alone; for, perfons, not invefted with a facred function, were fometimes initiated by the ceremony of the Taurobolium, and one invariable rule in thefe initiations was to wear the ftained garments as long as poffible, in token of their having been thus regenerated. This facrifice of regeneration was alfo fometimes performed for the purification of a whole nation, or the monarch that governed it. The animal facrificed was not obliged to be always of one fpecies; inftead of a bull, a ram was frequently facrificed, when the ceremony was called Criobolium, and fometimes a fhe-goat, when it obtained the

 name

* Prudentius apud Banier's Mythology, vol. i. p. 275.

name of Ægibolium. Some of theſe regenerations were valid only for twenty years, when they were to be renewed for the acquiſition of renovated virtue, and the celebration of them often continued for many days. The reader will find in Mountfaucon engravings of ſeveral of theſe Taurobolia and Criobolia, and in particular he will there meet with the deſign of a very curious one, dug up at Lyons, with an inſcription importing, that it was celebrated there for the health of the Emperor Antoninus Pius.*

But to return to that country which is the immediate ſcene of our inveſtigation, whence this doctrine is with great probability aſſerted in the moſt ancient periods to have ſpread over all the kingdoms of Aſia: we there find it at this day flouriſhing with uncommon vigour; all ranks and ages inflicting on themſelves ſevere mortifications in hopes of ſpeedy reſtitution, and preſſing forward to the goal of immortality. From the poſſibility of this envied reſtitution to priſtine purity and happineſs none in India are excluded, but thoſe who have been either ſo unfortunate or abandoned as to have forfeited their caſt; the unhappy and rejected, even though repentant,

race

* See Antiquities Explained, vol. ii. p. 108.

race of Parias or Chandalas, who, by the unalterable laws of Brahma, are doomed to be the everlafting drudges of the other tribes, excluded from even the hope of rifing to a higher rank in the creation, or ever amending their forlorn and defperate ftate. In fuch abomination are thefe Chandalahs holden, that, on the Malabar fide of India, if they chance even to touch one of a fuperior tribe, he draws his fabre and cuts him down on the fpot, without any check from the laws of the country. Even the fhade, which the wretched body of a Chandalah in paffing throws upon any object, imparts pollution, pollution not to be wiped away but by a particular procefs of purification. Deftined to mifery from their birth, bowed down with inceffant toils, which, to any but the patient and unrepining Chandalah, would make life an intolerable burthen; death itfelf, that laft refuge of the unfortunate, opens no dawn of comfort to his mind, and unfolds no fcenes of future felicity to reward his paft fufferings. The gates of Jaggernaut itfelf are to him for ever clofed; and he is driven, with equal difgrace, from the fociety of men and the temples of the gods. Human policy or caprice might have given birth to the other fingular inftitutions

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of this great empire; but to what principle of human policy can we attribute a law ſo contrary to the general principles of benevolence, that reigns through the inſtitutions aſcribed to Brahma, and fraught with ſuch a diabolical ſpirit of revenge and malignity?

Like their neighbours, the Indians, the ancient Chineſe, alſo, according to Couplet, believed not only in the *immortality*, but in the *tranſmigration*, of the human ſoul, occaſioned by its primeval defection. They conſidered the departed ſpirits of their moſt virtuous anceſtors, who had performed the planetary journey, as engaged in the celeſtial regions in the benevolent office of interceſſion with the Supreme Being for their progeny, ſojourning, like weary pilgrims, on the bobun of earth; and therefore, ſays our author, at their feſtival entertainments, before the banquet commenced, they made offerings to them of the choiceſt viands, and poured out libations to their honour; a practice very ſimilar to the ceremony of the Indian STRADHA.* The Chineſe theologians, however, while they conclude all men to be involved in vice and error, do not go the dreadful length of anathematizing for ever any of the inferior caſts, and barring

* Couplet Scientiæ Sinicæ, lib. ii. p. 103.

barring them out at once from the gates of heavenly mercy and every benefit of earthly compaſſion. It is doubtleſs a relic of the abominable Cuthite doctrines, of that relentleſs race, whoſe bloody worſhip outraged all the dictates of humanity, and who, in their infernal orgies, offered up even their ſons and their daughters to devils.

Beſides the promiſe of entering at large into the Brahmin initiations, I have repeatedly pledged myſelf in the courſe of this extenſive review, or rather hiſtory, of the Aſiatic theology, to compare the greater Mithratic myſteries, as far as they are known, with thoſe which were celebrated in the cavern-temples of India, and there cannot be a better opportunity for making that compariſon than what the preſent chapter affords, in which we are conſidering the Brahmin doctrine of the regeneration of the ſoul, by a ſevere courſe of progreſſive penances riſing above each other in horror and anguiſh. The principal feature of ſimilitude is the unexampled tortures which the reſpective candidates underwent in their progreſs through either dreadful ordeal. I ſhall begin with deſcribing the probationary diſcipline endured by the Brahmin during his progreſs through the four degrees of the Char

Asherum. I shall then proceed to detail the severities submitted to by the Mithriacs, and the reader, who will take the trouble of turning, while he reads these accounts, to the description in the first chapter of the Indian Theology of the Grecian mysteries in honour of Ceres, celebrated at Eleusis, and to that of the Egyptian pomp sacred to Osiris and Isis at Philaë, in the second, will find that he has nearly the whole of the mysteries, performed in the ancient world, brought at once before his view in this Dissertation, detailed from the best authorities, and pourtrayed with no unanimated, but I trust with no exaggerating, pencil.

Abul Fazil, the secretary of Sultan Akber, from the sacred books of the Brahmins, to which he had access, as well as from the oral accounts of those Brahmins, who reposed a confidence in the minister of their most lenient monarch of Mohammedan extract, has inserted, in the third volume of the Ayeen Akbery, a very ample description of the Char Asherum, of which I shall immediately submit the substance to the reader.

The veneration anciently entertained both in India and Persia for the SUN and FIRE, together with many of their consequent superstitions,

perſtitions, engaged a conſiderable portion of the firſt chapter of the Indian Theology. I did not preſume to determine in which of thoſe nations that worſhip firſt commenced, but referred it to a Chaldaic origin; to that people who earlieſt practiſed the Sabian idolatry. I cited claſſical authority in proof that horſes were, in Perſia, ſacrificed to the ſun, in addition to which, I might have added that direct aſſertion of Juſtin, from Trogus Pompeius; *ſolem unum Deum eſſe credunt et equos Deo ſacratos ferunt.* From Sanſcreet books, I alſo produced evidence of the exiſtence, in ancient æras, of an ASWAMMEDHA-JUG, or horſe-ſacrifice, in India. It is to be feared that both the Mithratic and the Suryatic rites were ſtained with a more horrid ſpecies of ſacrifice, the blood of men. This abominable rite, ſo univerſally prevalent in the ancient world, took its riſe from the idea, that, the nobler was the victim offered, the more propitious and benignant was rendered the deity adored. With how dreadful a profuſion human blood was anciently ſhed on the altars of India has already been related; that the caverns of the furious Mithriacs were little better than vaſt ſepulchres of ſacrificed men is evident, not only from Porphyry's

ſecond book, De Abſtinentia,* in which the dreadful pangs of hunger and thirſt, and various other miſeries undergone by the emaciated candidate during initiation, are enumerated; but is farther evinced by a very curious fact, related in the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Socrates, a Chriſtian writer who flouriſhed in the fifth century, ſhortly after the final extinction of the Mithratic ſuperſtition at Rome, by order of Gracchus, præfect of the prætorium. In this author's time, the Chriſtians of Alexandria having diſcovered a cavern that had been conſecrated to Mithra, but for a long period cloſed up, reſolved to explore it, and examine what remnants of that ſuperſtition it contained, when, to their aſtoniſhment, the principal thing they found in it was a great quantity of human ſkulls, with other bones of men that had been ſacrificed, which were brought out, publicly expoſed, and excited the utmoſt horror in the inhabitants of that great city.†

This general though dreadful feature of reſemblance between the Mithriac and Suryatic devotees, having been thus again brought before the view of the reader, I proceed, in the

* De Abſtinentia, lib. ii. p. 71, et ſeq.

† Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. lib. ii. cap. 2.

the firſt place, from that authentic regiſter the Ayeen Akbery, to preſent him with the account of

The Brahmin Char-Asherum, or four Degrees of Probation.

The first degree, or Brahm-charee.—This ſtate may be entered into by the young Brahmin noviciate, ſo early as his eighth year, when the firſt ceremony of initiation is the putting on of the ſacred zennar, or cord of three threads, in memory and honour of the three great deities of Hindoſtan. Thoſe who refuſe to admit the hypotheſis, ſo amply detailed in the former chapter, relative to what I ſuppoſe to be the genuine origin of thoſe three deities, muſt continue to conſider them as the three elements perſonified; earth, fire, and air; which latter element condenſed, according to the Brahmins, is water. Theſe, ſay the antagoniſts of that hypotheſis, are the principles of which all bodies in nature, and man himſelf, are compoſed. Theſe were therefore conſidered as *firſt principles*, and in that ſenſe deified by a race plunged in materialiſm. I have thus ingenuouſly ſtated the oppoſite argument,

argument, that the reader, who is not inclined to degrade the human ſoul into a portion of reſpired air, may judge which of the two is the nobler hypotheſis.

The materials of which the zennar is compoſed, and the myſtic ceremonies with which it is formed, have been already deſcribed. This cord muſt be twiſted and put on the young Brahmin by his father or tutor; and, when put on for the firſt time, it is accompanied with a piece of the ſkin of an antelope, three fingers in breadth, but ſhorter than the zennar; the meaning of which I cannot conjecture, except it be alluſive to the life which the holy hermit leads in thoſe woody ſolitudes, where beaſts of the chaſe are his companions, and their ſkins his only covering from the inclemency of the weather. This doctrine of ſylvan ſecluſion is farther inculcated by their alſo inveſting the Brahmcharee or Brahmaſſari, as the word is ſometimes better written, by a circular belt, formed of a ſacred graſs, called *moonj*.*

He now learns the *Gayteree*, or hymn in honour of the ſun; and he is preſented with a ſtaff of ſacred palaſs-wood. He then leaves the houſe of his natural for the abode of his ſpiritual

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 215.

ſpiritual father, under whoſe tuition he learns all the ſublime doctrines and myſterious rites inculcated in the Vedas. There is no occaſion for me to recapitulate all the routine of his various ablutions. The preciſe enumeration of theſe would be in many inſtances indelicate, ſince it is with the Brahmins as with the Mahomedans, every call of animal nature is attended with reiterated lavation. Let us attend to his *dreſs*; for, the reader will ever bear in remembrance the difference ſubſiſting between a Brahmin, who is the old Brachman, and wears apparel; and the Yogee, or old gymnoſophiſt, who, warm with fervid piety, ſpurns external clothing. A gymnoſophiſt, or Hindoo penitent, is not properly a Brahmin; though a Brahmin, by adopting ſeverer auſterities, may become a gymnoſophiſt.

His dreſs conſiſts of, firſt, a *lungowtee*, or cloth of decency, which covers the waſte; ſecondly, a *lungee*, another cloth which folds over the former; thirdly, a linen robe without any ſuture, a kind of veſtment, which, it is remarkable, the great high prieſt himſelf condeſcended to wear; fourthly, a linen cap. He bathes every morning without any covering but the lungowtee and the graſs cord of moonj. His morning-ablution and the attendant ceremonies,

monies, extracted from this part of the Ayeen Akbery, are inserted in my second chapter with some observations, which need not be repeated here, although the account of the bathing itself must by no means be omitted. "The Brahmin bathes every morning before sun-rise. He begins his ablution with taking up in his right hand a little water, and says, Pardon my offences! After this, he throws away the water; then he rubs himself all over with earth; and, if he be in a river, dives three times, or else he throws water thrice over his body, and rubs himself with his hands. Next, he repeats the name of GOD, and, afterwards, thrice takes up in his right hand a little water, which he sips, and repeats certain prayers, during all which time he sprinkles water upon his head. Then, with his fore-finger and thumb, he stops his nostrils, and, bowing down his face to the surface of the water, repeats another prayer, and then plunges again or throws water over himself thrice. He then sprinkles seven times his forehead, breast, and shoulders; after this, joining his open hands, he fills them eight times with water, and throws it towards the sun, reciting a particular prayer. He then sips the water, and finally repeats the PA-

RAYENAM."

RAYENAM." After this ablution, he puts on the different garments above-defcribed, and, accordingly as he may chance to be a Brahmin of the Veefhnu or Seeva caft, makes the different marks on his forehead and body with afhes, turmeric, or vermilion; but, if he have bathed in the Ganges, nothing can be more in repute for this ceremony than the clay of that holy river, which wafhes away all human offences. He now takes up his pilgrim ftaff, and throws over his fhoulders a leathern belt, with a pouch faftened to it, for the purpofe of containing fuch food as benevolence may fupply him with. He then performs the *findeyha* and *bowm*. The former is a prayer attended with a repetition of drinking and fprinkling of water after a particular manner. The latter is a burnt-facrifice, and can only be properly performed in a fire which has been kindled by the friction of two pieces of palafs or peepul wood, which are accounted facred. The ceremony confifts in paffing through the fire, or throwing into it, a piece of the fame confecrated wood with which it was kindled, and the flame of which is never fuffered to be wholly extinguifhed.

When the charity of the pious has fupplied rice or fruits for his fcanty meal, he

firft

firſt offers it to his tutor, who taſtes it, and, having craved his permiſſion to eat, with many prayers and ablutions he gets through his vegetable banquet. The luxury of honey, beetel, and perfumes, is denied to the Hindoo aſpirant, who never goes where there are ſinging, dancing, or gaming. As he grows up, the hair of his head is ſhaven, all but one ſolitary lock at the back of the crown. He is permitted to have no commerce with women; but the moſt rigid purity in thought and action is enjoined him. All the ebullitions of anger, envy, and revenge, are checked by the ſevereſt diſcipline; and the love of truth and virtue inculcated by promiſes of the moſt flattering diſtinction and attainments in another and more perfect ſtate of being. In prayer, ablution, and ſtudying the Vedas, the day is conſumed, and, when the ſun begins to decline, ceremonies, nearly ſimilar to thoſe which preceded its appearing above the horizon, are again repeated: the gayteree, the ſindeyha, the howm. At length he retires to ſhort repoſe on his wretched bed of ſtraw, or ſleeps under the firſt tree that offers, wrapt up in the ſkin of a ſtag, antelope, or ſome other animal.* Some continue in this initiatory ſtate only

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 219.

only five years; the more general practice is to remain in it twelve years; but others, from diffidence and other motives, ſpend all their lives in this preparatory ordeal.

THE SECOND DEGREE, OF GERISHTH.—When the Bramaſſari has finiſhed the courſe of ſtudy, devotion, and auſterity, preſcribed him, if he feel an inclination to continue his ſpiritual progreſs, to deſpiſe all terreſtrial enjoyments, and devote the reſt of his life to the ſervice of the ſtern deity whom he adores, it is in the higheſt degree meritorious; but if he feel no ſuch inclination, or ſhrink from the ſeverity of future ſuffering, he is not compelled to advance farther in the dreadful trial. In that caſe, he waits upon his Brahmin-preceptor, and obtains permiſſion to return to the houſe of his father. In the ſtate of GERISHTH, the dreſs is entirely changed, except in the article of the zennar, which is retained through life. The initiated now puts on a turban of linen rolled round in many folds; a ſheet eight cubits long and two broad ſerves to cover his loins and thighs; another ſheet four cubits long and two broad is thrown over his ſhoulders: this latter may have a ſuture, the former muſt have none.

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The Gerifhth rifes four ghurries before day-break, and goes through all the ceremonies which were obferved by him in his former ftate, but his ablutions are doubled, and his prayers, fprinklings, and facrifices, proportionably increafed. His day is divided into eight different parts, to each of which a particular duty is affigned, the enumeration of all which would be tedious to an European reader. He offers folemn oblations to the deutahs, and his departed anceftors, whom he hopes fpeedily to rejoin: he fupports life by gleaning the fields after the reapers, or by begging here and there a handful of rice, and a part even of this fcanty fupply he throws into the fire, as an offering to the deutah and the dead. In the evening, the multiplied ceremonies of ablution, the findehya, and the howm, return; and afterwards he retires to pafs the greater part of the night in vigils, obferving the filent courfe of the moon and planets, and contemplating with rapture the blue vault in which the fixed ftars are placed; thofe glittering orbs, among which his impatient fpirit burns to mount. In this fenfe alone can we underftand what we are told by Abul Fazil, in regard to the Brahmins of this degree paffing the evening in the ftudy of philofophy:

philoſophy: it was an aſtronomical philoſophy deeply connected with their Sabian theology; and, though the ſecretary of Akber was not deeply acquainted with their ſyſtem of aſtronomy, yet, from that extent in which it is now known to the moderns, we are certain that a very large portion of the night muſt anciently have been devoted to this ſtudy. The awful ſeaſon of incumbent darkneſs was that in which anciently the deeper myſteries of the Brahmin religion commenced, and nocturnal hymns reſounded through the long ailes of Elephanta, and echoed amidſt the ſpacious dome of Salſette. Through the northern gates of thoſe caverns, or cavities, pierced in the roof for the purpoſe, they watched the motions of the planets, and marked the gradual apparent revolution of the heavens; on particular aſpects and conjunctions, rending the midnight air with ſhouts of joy or outcries of terror.

Were not they accuſtomed thus nightly in their cells to obſerve the celeſtial phænomena, how could their various faſts and feſtivals, which are, for the moſt part, regulated by the poſition of the heavenly bodies, and particularly by the entrance of the moon into the reſpective *nac ſhattras*, or lunar manſions, have

been inſtituted with ſuch aſtronomical preciſion? What is the RAAS JATTRA but the circular dance of the planets round the ſun? What are the eternal conteſts of the Soors and Aſſoors, or bright and ſable genii, repreſented in the feſtival dramas of India, eſpecially at the great equinoctial feaſt of Durga, but emblematical repreſentations of the imagined conteſts of the ſummer and winter ſigns for the dominion of the varied year, and the different aſpects of the planets? What is meant by the great celeſtial dragon, that on every eclipſe ſeizes with his teeth the affrighted ſun and moon, but the aſcending and the deſcending nodes? What is the ſerpent with a thouſand heads on which Veeſhnu ſleeps at the ſolſtitial period, but the hydra of the ſkies, that vaſt conſtellation, the numerous ſtars incloſed in which are poetically called its flaming heads, vomiting fire, and on which the Greeks founded the ſtory of the Lernæan hydra, ſlain by Hercules, (that is, the conſtellation Hercules,) the foot of which latter aſteriſm, on the celeſtial ſphere, is placed near the head of the former. Theſe dramatic exhibitions at the various feſtivals of India, nearly all founded upon aſtronomical obſervation, inſtituted in the earlieſt periods of the

Indian empire, allusive to physical phænomena, and the meaning of which is not at this day fully comprehended by the Indian audience themselves, I can consider in no other light than as relics of the sacred mysteries anciently exhibited in the holy grove and the gloomy cavern, where, as in the Mithratic mysteries, the constellations were represented by forms similar to those under which they were designated in the heavens; where, while Seeva rode on the bull, Veeshnu flew on the eagle of the sphere, and became successively incarnate in the fishes, the boar, (an asterism in the Chinese zodiac,) the testudo, and the lion. At this late period, and with the few genuine documents of remote Indian antiquity in our possession, we can only be guided by analogy in forming our judgement relative to the ancient mysteries practised in the religious exhibitions of the Brachmanian magi; and that judgement may, in a great degree, be regulated by the glimmering information which has descended to us, relative to the doctrines and practices of their Persian brethren, the disciples of Zoroaster, in the neighbouring mountains of Media, during periods in which we have few authenticated accounts of those flourishing in Hindostan.

The initiation, therefore, into theſe profounder myſteries, I conſider as peculiar to the ſecond Aſherum, in which both the conſtitution and the mind of the aſpirant were endued with matured and manly vigour, to bear, with leſs injury, the trying ſeverities which diſtinguiſhed it, the firſt Aſherum being a ſtate of comparative infancy. The third Aſherum, on the deſcription of which we muſt now enter, is the ſtate of imbecil age. The accumulation of horrors which mark this ſtate, I ſhall inſert almoſt *verbatim* from Abul Fazil.

THE THIRD DEGREE, or BANPERISTH.— When a Brahmin, determined to be a Banperiſth, arrives at advanced age, or becomes a grandfather, he gives up the management of his family to his ſon, or ſome other relation, and he then bids adieu to the world. He quits the populous city for eternal ſolitude, and, retiring to the deſert, he there builds himſelf a cell or grotto, where he gradually weans his heart from all worldly concerns, and makes preparation for his laſt journey. If his wife, through affection, wiſhes to accompany him to this woody ſolitude, it is allowable; but the ſecluded pair muſt ſubdue

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all carnal inclinations, and become cold as the rock on which they repoſe.

Here the hoary devotee cheriſhes the perpetual fire for ſacrifice, and wraps his aged limbs in a veſtment made of the *leaves or bark of trees*; a coarſe lungowtee being the only piece of linen that he may wear. He never cuts his hair nor pairs his nails. At morning, noon, and evening, he performs his ablutions with the ſindehya; and every morning and evening the howm takes place, in the ſame manner as is directed for the geriſhth; but his ablutions are now trebled, and he lives, as it were, in the purifying wave. Yet, ſolitary and forlorn, he hangs down his head, bending under the weight of imaginary crimes. In ſilence not to be broken, and with reverential awe, he perpetually reads and meditates on the holy Vedas. He never ſuffers ſleep to oppreſs his eye-lids in the day-time, and, in the night, he takes his ſcanty repoſe upon the bare ground. In the ſummer months, he ſits in the ardent beam of a tropical ſun, ſurrounded with four fires. During the four rainy months, he dwells upon a ſtage raiſed above the water by four poles, but entirely expoſed to the inclemency of the weather. In the four winter months, he *ſits all night in cold*

 water.

water. He inceſſantly performs the faſt of Chanderayan, and eats only when night approaches.

To ſuſtain life in his voluntary exile, he is allowed to amaſs a ſtore of proviſions ſufficient for one year; but he is abſolutely forbidden to taſte any food artificially prepared by man, and he exiſts ſolely upon dried fruits and grain that grows wild in the deſerts. That grain is not to be cooked even by himſelf, he is only allowed to ſoften it with water. When he cannot collect proviſions himſelf, he applies to other Banperiſths, or, if they cannot ſupply him, he then through abſolute neceſſity goes to the next town for ſuch food as charity may ſupply him with, but he remains there no longer than is neceſſary for the purpoſe of obtaining that food.

If worn down by a long courſe of unrelenting ſeverities, the animal ſpirits ſink, and he becomes weary of life: he then, by the permiſſion of the Vedas, travels either to the eaſt, whence the bright ſymbol of the deity darts its firſt ray upon the earth, or directs his progreſs towards the north, doubtleſs for an aſtronomical reaſon, ſince, in deſcribing the two gates of heaven, through

which

which the migrating ſoul glides, Homer informs us,

> That on the *north* is pervious to mankind,
> The ſacred *ſouth* to immortals is conſign'd,

purſuing his ſolitary journey to the land unknown. Diſdaining all obſtruction, rejecting all nouriſhment, and abſorbed in intenſe contemplation on the ſtate to which he is rapidly advancing, he preſſes forward in his fancied career to happineſs and glory, till exhauſted nature faints under the taſk: he ſtaggers, falls, and expires! If a leſs tedious and toilſome death ſhould prove more agreeable to him, he is not reſtrained to this mode of departure, but he may plunge at once into conſuming fire, he may bury himſelf in the overwhelming flood, or he may precipitate himſelf from a rocky eminence, that he may be daſhed to pieces in the fall. Theſe ſuicidal executions they conſider as the ſure road to paradiſe; but, unleſs the penitent has reached the fourth degree, and ſuffered the tortures of the ſtate of Saniaſſi, he has no title, from this action alone, to the ſublime rewards of MOKT.* The faſt of Chanderayan, mentioned above, is thus practiſed:—The devotee

* Heaven. See Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 223.

eats on the firſt day only one mouthful, two mouthfuls during the ſecond day, and he thus continues increaſing a mouthful every day for a month. He then decreaſes gradually a mouthful on each day, till he is at length reduced to the ſingle mouthful with which he began. Such is the Chanderayan, and it muſt be owned to be a very ingenious mode of inflicting progreſſive and lingering torture: but the ingenuity of the Hindoos in this reſpect ſtill more wonderfully diſplays itſelf in many of thoſe enumerated in the following ſection, which forms a proper appendix to the tremendous excruciations of the third Aſherum.

Different Kinds of Hindoo Fasts.

The firſt kind is, when the penitent neither eats nor drinks for a day and night. There are twenty-nine ſuch faſts in the courſe of the year, which are indiſpenſable.

The ſecond kind. He faſts during the day, and eats at night.

The third kind. He eats nothing but fruits, and drinks milk or water.

The fourth kind. He eats once during the day and night.

The

The fifth kind. He eats only one particular kind of food during the day and night, but as often as he pleafes.

The fixth kind. Chanderayan, which has been defcribed.

The feventh kind. He neither eats nor drinks for twelve days.

The eighth kind. This lafts twelve days. During the firft three days, he eats a little once in a day. During the next three days, he eats only once in the night. During the three days next fucceeding, he never taftes any thing, unlefs it be brought to him by the hand of accidental benevolence. During the laft three days, he neither eats nor drinks.

The ninth kind. This faft lafts fifteen days, and is obferved in the following manner: — For three days and nights, the penitent eats only one handful at night. For the next three days and nights, if accidental charity fhould beftow upon him fuch a handful, he eats it, otherwife he does not take any fuftenance. For the three fucceeding days and nights, he eats nothing. During the three days and nights following, he takes only a handful of warm water each day. The laft three days and nights of this dreadful penance,

nance, a handful of warm milk each day is his only allowance.

The tenth kind. For three days and nights, he neither eats nor drinks. He lights a fire, and ſits contemplative at a door, where there enters a hot ſuffocating wind, which he draws in with his breath.

The eleventh kind. This alſo laſts fifteen days, and is performed after the following manner:—Three days and nights he eats nothing but leaves; three days and nights, nothing but the ſeed of the lotos; three days and nights, nothing but peepul-leaves; three days and nights, the expreſſed juice of a particular kind of graſs called DOOBAH.

The twelfth kind. The following is his regimen for a week. The firſt day he lives entirely upon milk; the ſecond, upon milk-curds; the third, he taſtes nothing but ghee; the fourth, his diſguſting beverage is the urine of the cow; the fifth, the excrements of that holy animal are his allotted food; the ſixth, water is his only nouriſhment; on the ſeventh, the ſtern mandate of a ſevere ſuperſtition ordains to be a total faſt.

During every kind of faſt, he abſtains from fleſh, adeſs, lubya, honey, and molaſſes, ſleeps on the ground, plays not at any game, has

no

no connection with woman, anoints not himſelf with oil, neither ſhaves himſelf; but every day, while it laſts, he beſtows charity, and performs other good actions.

The FOURTH ASHERUM being the ſtate of Saniaſſi, and the Saniaſſi differing but little in point of unexampled ſeverity from the gymnoſophiſt of the ancients, or modern YOGEE, a character on the inveſtigation of which I muſt enter at conſiderable length, and with which it is my intention to conclude the Indian Theology, I ſhall, in this place, inſert the relation of the kindred tortures endured by the initiated in the MYSTERIES OF MITHRA; ſtupendous and nefarious myſteries, equally diſhonourable to the deity and deſtructive to man!

THE DREADFUL RITES OF INITIATION INTO THE MITHRIAC MYSTERIES UNVEILED.

The account, given in a preceding page of the diſcovery of the Mithriac ſepulchral cavern of Alexandria, is deciſive in regard to the human ſacrifices of the Mithriacs, but exhibits no ſatisfactory evidence relative to the peculiar mode of ornamenting and lighting

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up the ſubterraneous temple, deſcribed by me in a former chapter, and the refulgent orbs of different metals, (whence came the aſtronomical characters of chemiſtry in uſe among us,) by which the ſeveral planets were deſignated. I have it, however, now in my power to eſtabliſh beyond a doubt that curious circumſtance recorded by Celſus.

Towards the cloſe of the ſixteenth century, in digging between the hills Viminalis and Quirinalis, at Rome, and in a ſpot which formed the vineyard of Horatius Muti, ſome workmen diſcovered a vaulted chamber, or ſmall circular temple, and the reader has been already informed, that all the temples of Mithra and Veſta, that is, the ſun and fire, were both vaulted and circular, being ſymbolical of the world, fabricated by Mithra, and illumined by his beam, and nouriſhed and invigorated by the central fire of Veſta. In the middle of this temple ſtood a ſtatue of Mithra, of white marble, ſomewhat leſs than four feet high. It ſtood erect upon a globe, out of which a ſerpent iſſued, the emblem of life, which, twining in numerous folds around the body of the deity, marked the revolutions of his orb and the cycles of revolving time. The body of the ſtatue was that of a man,

the

the head was that of a lion, alluding to the LEO MITHRIACA, or lion of the zodiac, which the reader may ſee engraved on Dr. Hyde's firſt plate and in this volume. And here it may be uſeful to obſerve, that whenſoever, in antique ſculptures or paintings, we meet with figures having the heads of lions, bulls, dogs, ſerpents, or horſes, they in general allude either to thoſe in the zodiac, or one or other of the forty-eight old conſtellations, according to the aſtronomical mythology of the country. The Sphynx of Egypt, ſo often noticed as the ſymbol of the ſun in Leo and Virgo, and the Anubis of that country, expoſed to view when Syrius roſe heliacally, will fully explain my meaning. The two hands of this image graſp two keys, preſſed cloſely to his breaſt, and four large wings expand from his ſhoulders. The two keys plainly denote his power over the two hemiſpheres, when, as the poets have it, he unlocks *the gates of light* to either world, and his four wings evidently point to the four quarters of that univerſe which he commands, as well as the velocity with which the ſolar light travels to them. The circumſtance, however, which principally arreſted the attention of thoſe who diſcovered this cavern-temple, was, that, around this image,

A CIRCLE OF LAMPS was ſuſpended in regular order, which ſeemed to be made of baked earth, and which there can be but little doubt were formerly coloured to give the varied light of the planets ſymbolized, although thoſe colours were no longer diſcernible. What was exceedingly remarkable, theſe lamps were ſo arranged as that the ſide which gave the light was turned towards the ſtatue, a proof that the ancients knew the planets were themſelves opaque bodies, and derived their light from the central orb, around which they revolved.*

Such was the Perſian Mithra: — let us examine the character and offices of the prieſts who officiated in thoſe caverns, which, Luctatius has before partly informed us, were choſen to be his temples; for this reaſon, that, amidſt the darkneſs of thoſe receſſes, the aſtronomical prieſts might more effectually diſplay to the view of their diſciples the manner after which eclipſes of the ſun, and other heavenly bodies, took place. On this head we muſt again conſult Porphyry, who well knew, and as ably as poſſible defended againſt the repeated

* See the account of Flaminius Vacca, a Roman ſculptor, who examined this temple, extracted, from an Italian journal, by Mountfaucon in his Antiquities, vol. i. p. 232.

peated attacks of the fathers, the whole circle of Pagan ſuperſtitions. Porphyry informs us, that, from the lion being ſo uſual a ſymbol in theſe rites, the prieſts were ſometimes called *Leones*, and the prieſteſſes *Leænæ*; for, Mithra had female miniſters attendant on his orgies. Hence too the rites themſelves were often denominated *Leontica*. From a crow or raven being, in moſt Oriental regions, a bird ſacred to the ſun, and of great requeſt in theſe myſteries, they were thence called Coraces and Hierocoraces, and the myſteries themſelves Coracica and Hierocoracica.* The raven is one of the oldeſt conſtellations, and perpetually occurs on all the marbles on which the Mithratic emblems are engraved, as may be ſeen in the plates of Hyde and Mountfaucon, illuſtrative of the rites of Mithra. In fine, theſe rites were ſometimes called emphatically Eliaca, from El and Elios, terms which ſignify the ſun. All theſe prieſts wore the figures of the animal-conſtellations which they repreſented, and whoſe names they bore; but, as we have learned from Celſus, that, in the cave of Mithra, were exhibited the two-fold motions of the celeſtial orbs, that is, the apparent one of the fixed ſtars and the real one of the planetary;

* Porphyry de Abſtinentia, lib. iv. p. 165.

planetary; and, as there were *patres ſacrorum et matres ſacrorum*, ſo it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that there were numerous prieſts of different orders, ages, and ſtations, according to the different magnitudes of the conſtellations which they repreſented, ſome being placed in the zodiac, ſome in the northern, ſome in the ſouthern, hemiſphere; but, as to Mithra himſelf, I have Porphyry's expreſs authority for aſſerting that his elevated ſtation in his own temple was in the middle of the equinoctial, poſſibly engraved on high, in a broad line of gold, which cut the zodiac as in the real ſphere.*

The general figure of the cavern, and the poſition of the two gates; the gate of the fiery Cancer, the ſummer ſolſtice, through which the migrating ſoul deſcended on the *north*, and that of the watery Capricorn, the winter ſolſtice, through which it aſcended on the *ſouth*; the geometrical ſymbols with which it was adorned, the fountains of water that ran murmuring through the midſt of it, the fires kept continually burning in its inmoſt receſſes; the two laſt, emblematical of the fluid and igneous elements and the erected ladder of ſeven planetary gates; have all been noticed

* De Antro Nymph. p. 265, idem edit.

noticed in various preceding pages.* Among the decorations of the cave, alluded to and defcribed by Porphyry, were marble urns for the water of ablution, and with fuch fmall cifterns, or tanks, as they call them, every facred cavern in India at this day abounds. The Mithratic cave alfo contained numerous vafes full of honey for oblation. Now honey, I have obferved, ftill makes a principal part of the libations offered on the altars of the Indian deities. Porphyry defcants highly on the virtues of honey as a great cleanfer and purifyer of the blood, and therefore, fo far as man was concerned, properly ufed in initiation as an emblem of that purer ftate about to be commenced by the candidate. Speaking of it as an offering to the deity, he calls it the aliment, the nectar, of the gods. It is indeed the effence of odorous flowers, and it appears no more than juft and grateful, that a production, in part elaborated by the folar beam, fhould be offered up to the altar of the god, whofe vivifying energy matured it in the fragrant bofom of the parent-plant.

All ancient writers unite in afferting that the Mithriac myfteries were of an awful and terrifying nature. They feem to have thought

* See Indian Theology, chap. i. p. 316, et feq.

them too horrible even to be revealed, and have therefore left us totally in the dark as to the greater part of the puniſhments endured during initiation. Theſe puniſhments ſome of them affirm to be of eighty different kinds;* others reduce them to twenty-four in number.† From the ſeverity of thoſe which are known to poſterity, we may form ſome judgement of the others, the hiſtory of which is loſt in the abyſs of near two thouſand years.

A drawn ſword, if Tertullian may be credited, oppoſed the candidate at his very entrance into the cavern, from which, in the virtuous obſtinacy of perſeverance, he received more than one wound. The inflexibility and firmneſs of his character being thus tried, and ſteel itſelf in vain oppoſed to him, he was admitted through the north gate, or that of Cancer, where a fire, fiercely glowing with the ſolſtitial blaze, ſcared, but could not terrify or retard, the determined aſpirant. He was compelled to paſs through this flame repeatedly, and was thence hurried to the ſouthern gate, or that of Capricorn, where the ſolſtitial floods awaited him. Into theſe floods

* Porphyry de Abſtinentia, p. 150.

† Nonni Dionyſiaca, p. 97.

floods his exhaufted frame was inftantly plunged, and he was obliged to fwim in them, and combat with the waves, till life was at the laft gafp. The dreadful rite of purification was not yet over: he was now doomed to undergo a rigid faft, which, according to Nicætas, quoted by the Abbé Banier, lafted fifty days; but this we muft prefume to be exaggerated, fince no human creature can exift fifty hours without taking fuftenance. We can only reconcile it to reafon, by fuppofing the time much fhorter, or an allowance of fome fcanty food, barely fufficient to fupport agonizing nature. During this rigid faft he was expofed to the horrors of a dreary defert, remote from human affiftance, and fhut out from human compaffion. After this, according to the fame author, the candidates were cruelly beaten with rods for two whole days; and, during the laft twenty days of their trial, were buried up to their neck in fnow.

If nature funk not, as fhe frequently did, under all this dreadful accumulation of fufferings, the honours of initiation were conferred upon the candidate; and, firft, a golden ferpent was placed in his bofom, as an emblem of his being regenerated and made a difciple of Mithra. For this animal, renewing its

vigour in the ſpring of every year, by caſting its ſkin, was not only conſidered as an apt ſymbol of renovated and revireſcent virtue, but of the ſun himſelf, whoſe genial heat is annually renewed when he re-viſits the vernal ſigns; at that period, when, as I have elſewhere expreſſed myſelf of Mithra opening the year in Taurus,

> Burſting the gloom of winter's drear domain,
> The radiant youth reſumes his vernal reign;
> With ſinewy arms reluctant Taurus tames,
> Beams with new grace, and darts ſeverer flames.

The candidate was next adorned with a myſtic zone, or belt, which was the circle of the zodiac, and had the zodiacal figures engraved upon it. Upon his head was placed the Perſian tiara, or high Phrygian bonnet, terminating pyramidically, as we ſee it on all the ſtatues of Mithra. This cap was ſymbolical of the beam of the ſun, and it was worn by the prieſts of Egypt, as well as by thoſe of Perſia; it is conſpicuous on the heads of the antique figures, engraved on the large plate of the temple of Luxore, in my former volume.

The high prieſt of Mithra wore a linen tiara, or mitre, of great magnitude, and rolled round ſeveral times, in imitation of the convolutions

volutions of the orbs. Poſſibly the name of *mitre* might be primarily derived from this high conical cap worn in the rites of Mithra, which was alſo covered with rays and painted with various devices. It is to theſe caps that the prophet Ezekiel, cited in the firſt chapter, alludes when he ridicules the ornaments that decorated the gods of the Sabian idolaters, which he calls, *the images of the Chaldeans portrayed upon the walls with vermilion,* GIRDED *with* GIRDLES *upon their loins, and exceeding in* DYED ATTIRE *upon their heads.** The Brahmins and their deities, to this day, wear the myſtic belt, or girdle; and it has been before obſerved, from ancient travellers, that they formerly wore a cap or turban, of white muſlin, folded round the head in ſuch a manner, as that the extremities of the folds exhibited to the ſpectator the appearance of the two horns of a cow, that is, of the moon in her increaſe.† This faſhion of folding the ſaſh that girds the head is not now, I believe, in uſe, at leaſt in general uſe, in India; and perhaps never flouriſhed, but among the higher orders of the prieſts. Its exiſtence there, however, in ancient periods ſtill farther proves

* Ezekiel, xxiii. 15.

† See Voyage de l'Arabie Heureuſe, p. 135.

the ſimilarity of the aſtronomical mythology of theſe two nations.

The noviciate was now inveſted with the *candys*, or large looſe tunic, which, on every ancient picture of Mithra, is repreſented floating widely in the air from the ſhoulders of the god, while his rapid wings waft him impetuouſly through the expanſe of heaven. This tunic or mantle was the moſt beautiful and ſplendid pageant in the world; having a purple ground, and being ſtudded all over with innumerable ſtars, the conſtellations of both hemiſpheres, like the robe worn by *Iſis Omnia*, and engraved in the firſt volume of the Indian Hiſtory, after the deſcription of that goddeſs, as beheld in the pomp of her paraphernalia, by Apuleius, who had himſelf been initiated in the myſteries of Eleuſis. He had likewiſe the paſtoral ſtaff, or croſier, ſimilar to that of the Brahmins, put into his hand, being alluſive to the immediate influence of the ſun in the affairs of agriculture.*

Thus inveſted and decorated with all the ſymbols of the power and operations of his god, he was prepared for thoſe greater and more tremendous myſteries, of which no authentic

* See Apuleius, vol. i. p. 13.

thentic relations have reached poſterity, but in which both bulls and men are ſuppoſed to have been ſacrificed, and in which real lions, whence the myſteries were called *leontica*, and other animals, whoſe figures covered the walls of the temple, are thought to have been introduced. The ill-omened raven ſcreamed aloud its funeral note; the dreadful barkings of the dog Sirius reverberated through the cavern, *viſæque canes ululare per umbras*; the hiſſings of envenomed ſerpents, that is, the Draco and Serpentarius of the ſphere, filled with terror the trembling audience; for there, if ever, in that ſidereal Metempſychoſis, or paſſage of the ſoul among the ſtars to its final abode, the MOKT of the Brahmins, *angues Triptolemi ſtridebant*; and there, if ever, were heard thoſe dreadful thunderings and lightnings the conflict of elements and warring clouds, which Mithra at his will could congregate or diſſipate, and which the poet Claudian profeſſedly alludes to as forming a part of the Eleuſinian myſteries; myſteries of which Warburton ought to have known, that thoſe of Mithra were the prototype, becauſe the Perſians were a more ancient nation than the Greeks.

Jam mihi cernuntur trepidis delubra moveri
Sedibus, et claram diſpergere fulmina lucem;
Adventum teſtata Dei! Jam magnus ab imis
Auditur fremitis terris, templumque remugit.*

How much more applicable this deſcription is to the ſtupendous exhibitions in the Mithratic temple than thoſe of Eleuſis muſt be evident to the reader, who reflects how much ſublimer a character in antiquity was Mithra than Ceres; how much ſuperior the deity, who rules the heavens, in which thunder is generated and lightning kindled, to the deity which preſides over the earth and its productions. In fact, in the rites of the former, the thunders alluded to were the awful tropical thunders, and bore immediate reference to a particular ſtage of the myſtic exhibition; in thoſe of the latter, they were principally uſed to ſwell the pomp of the ceremony, and elevate the grandeur of the goddeſs.

How cloſe an imitation the Eleuſinian myſteries were of the more ancient rites of Perſia will, I am of opinion, appear from what has been inſerted in a preceding page, relative to the officiating characters who preſided in the former, and who were of an aſtronomical caſt. Indeed, the general feature of

* Claudian, p. 54.

of ſimilarity between them is ſo great, and both have ſo manifeſt a relation to thoſe of India, that I hope the reader will pardon me if I wind up this account of the Perſian myſteries with ſelecting a few ſtriking paſſages from a preceding volume on the ſubject, in which that ſimilarity is moſt particularly apparent. It muſt be owned, indeed, that the Greek philoſophers improved upon thoſe inſtituted by their predeceſſors by the profound morality which they inculcated in their myſteries; morality, which, after all, is far preferable and far more beneficial to man than the boldeſt flights of imagination in the inſtitution of a wild ſyſtem of a fabulous ſidereal Metempſychoſis.

Nothing can be conceived more ſolemn than the rites of initiation into the greater myſteries of Eleuſis, as deſcribed by Apuleius and Dion Chryſoſtome, who had both gone through the awful ceremony: nothing more tremendous and appalling than the ſcenery exhibited before the eyes of the terrified *aſpirant*. After entering the grand veſtibule of the myſtic ſhrine, he was led by the hierophant, amidſt ſurrounding darkneſs and incumbent horrors, through all thoſe extended ailes, winding avenues, and gloomy adyta, already mentioned

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as equally belonging to the myftic temples of Egypt, Eleufis, and India. I have afferted before, that the Metempfychofis was one of the leading *principia* taught in thofe temples, and this firft ftage was intended to reprefent the toilfome wanderings of the benighted foul through the mazes of vice and error before initiation: or, in the words of an ancient writer, quoted by Warburton from Stobæus: "It was a rude and fearful march through night and darknefs."* Prefently the ground began to rock beneath his feet, the whole temple trembled, and ftrange and dreadful voices were heard through the midnight filence. To thefe fucceeded other louder and more terrific noifes, refembling thunder; while quick and vivid flafhes of lightning darted through the cavern, difplaying to his view many ghaftly fights and hideous fpectres, emblematical of the various vices, difeafes, infirmities, and calamities, incident in that ftate of terreftrial bondage from which his ftruggling foul was now going to emerge, as well as of the horrors and penal torments of the guilty in a future ftate. At this period, all the pageants of vulgar idolatry, all the train of gods, fupernal and infernal, paffed in awful fucceffion

* See Divine Legation, vol. i. p. 235.

ſucceſſion before him, and a hymn, called *the Theology of Idols*, recounting the genealogy and functions of each, was ſung: afterwards, the whole fabulous detail was ſolemnly recanted by the myſtagogue; a divine hymn in honour of ETERNAL AND IMMUTABLE TRUTH was chanted, and the profounder myſteries commenced. " And now, arrived on the verge of *death* and *initiation*, every thing wears a dreadful aſpect; it is all horror, trembling, and aſtoniſhment." An icy chillineſs ſeizes his limbs; a copious dew, like the damp of real death, bathes his temples; he ſtaggers, and his faculties begin to fail; when the ſcene is of a ſudden changed, and the doors of the interior and ſplendidly-illumined temple are thrown wide open. " A miraculous and divine light diſcloſes itſelf: and ſhining plains and flowery meadows open on all hands before him." *Acceſſi confinium mortis*, ſays Apuleius,* *et calcato Proſerpinæ limine, per omnia vectus elementa remeavi; nocte medio vidi* SOLEM *candido coruſcantem lumine:*—Arrived at the bourn of mortality, after having trod the gloomy threſhold of Proſerpine, I paſſed rapidly through all the ſurrounding elements; and, at

* Apuleii Metamorphoſis, lib. ii. v. i. p. 273. Edit. Bipont. 1788.

at deep midnight, beheld the ſun ſhining in meridian ſplendour. The clouds of mental error and the ſhades of real darkneſs being now alike diſſipated, both the ſoul and body of the initiated experienced a delightful viciſſitude; and while the latter, purified with luſtrations, bounded in a blaze of glory, the former diſſolved in a tide of overwhelming tranſport. Thoſe few authors of the ancient world, who have written on this ſubject, and who have dared to unfold to poſterity the awful and deep ſecrets into which they were initiated, ſpeak of them exactly as the Brahmins do of the divine raptures of *abſorption* in the Deity, or the modern ſect of Swedenborgh of thoſe of their imagined Elyſium. At that period of virtuous and triumphant exultation, according to the divine Plato, (the VYASA of Greece,) " they ſaw celeſtial beauty in all the dazzling radiance of its perfection, when, joining with the glorified chorus, they were admitted to the μακαρίαν ὄψιν, or *beatific viſion*, and were initiated into the moſt bleſſed of all myſteries."

The preceding relation principally concerns THE GREATER MYSTERIES. The firſt and moſt important ceremony in the LESSER MYSTERIES of Eleuſis was the purification of the

the body by water, intended to inculcate the neceſſity of a ſimilar purification of the ſoul from the impure adheſion of vicious paſſions and propenſities; and it is remarkable, that the officer aſſiſting upon that ſolemn occaſion was called Ὑδρανος, from ὕδωρ, *water.* After ablution, the aſpirant was clothed in a linen veſtment, the emblem of purity, and we are informed, in the Ayeen Akbery, that the Brahmin-candidate, in the firſt ſtage of probation, was arrayed "in a linen garment without future." But the myſtic temple itſelf, as deſcribed by Apuleius, was *ædes ampliſſima*; according to Vitruvius, it was *immani magnitudine*; and, according to Strabo, it was capable of holding as large a number as a theatre. If theſe ſeveral authors had intended to deſcribe the pagodas of Salſette and of Elephanta, could they have done it with more characteriſtic accuracy? temples, of which the former, according to M. Niebuhr, is a ſquare of 120 feet, and in the latter of which, if we are rightly informed in the ſeventh volume of the Archæologia, the grand altar alone is elevated to the aſtoniſhing height of twenty-ſeven feet. The gloomy avenues ſurrounding them have been alſo particulariſed, in which an overwhelming dread and horror ſeized the benighted

nighted wanderer: and, with respect to the gaudy shows and splendid scenery occasionally displayed to the view of the initiated in their recesses; who, that beholds the superb decorations, the richly-painted walls, and carved imagery, in the modern pagodas; who, that considers the beauty of the colours, and the ingenuity of the devices, conspicuous in many of the manufactures of India, whether in gold and silver enamel, in boxes curiously inlaid with ivory, in carpets of silk richly flowered, and linens stained with variegated dies; can possibly entertain a doubt of the ability of the ancient Indians strikingly to portray, on canvass or otherwise, the allegorical visions, in which the genius of the nation takes so much delight; the amaranthine bowers, in which beatified spirits are supposed to reside, and the Elysian plains of EENDRA's voluptuous paradise?

The initiated, in the Grecian temples, were also crowned with myrtle, and the priests of Mithra were invariably decked with a rich tiara, wound about with the same foliage. Finally, the hierophant, that is, *the revealer of sacred things*, in the Eleusinian mysteries, was arrayed in the habit and adorned with the symbols of the great Creator of the world,

of

of whom in thoſe myſteries he was ſuppoſed to be the ſubſtitute, and revered as the emblem. He was attended in his ſacred office by three aſſiſtant miniſters, of whom the firſt was called Δαδουχος, or the torch-bearer; he was intended to repreſent the SUN. The ſecond was denominated Κηρυξ, or the herald; he was conſidered as the type of the planet MERCURY. The third was called 'Ο ἐπι Βωμῳ, or the miniſter of the altar, and he was venerated as the ſymbol of the MOON. The ſame characteriſtic diſtinctions doubtleſs prevailed in thoſe of India, where the Sun, Moon, and Mercury, under the name of Budha, for ever occur in the varied page of their mythology. There perhaps, as in the rites of Mithra in Perſia, the chief gods attended in the aſſumed characters of the various conſtellations. Their phyſical theology, which led them, in various inſtances, to conſider the Deity as an incarnate agent upon earth, would naturally lead them in theſe myſterious inſtitutions to ſhadow out, under the perſon of the high preſiding Brahmin, the ſupreme Creator of all things, and to decorate that ſacred perſonage (the ſymbolical repreſentation of Deity) after the manner of the Perſian Mithra, with a looſely-floating tunic of a bright cerulean tincture,

and

and ſpangled with innumerable ſtars. At the ſame time, their great attachment to aſtronomy would induce them to conſider the prieſts, who officiated around him, as repreſenting the planetary train moving in their ſeveral ſtations by his immediate command and influence, and clothed with brightneſs from the reflection of his own tranſcendent glory.

After having thus deſcribed, as far as they have been revealed to us by Apuleius and other ancient writers, the Mithriac myſteries, I come at length to detail the yet unparalleled ſufferings endured in

THE FOURTH ASHERUM, OR STATE OF SANIASSI; AND THE SERIES OF EXQUISITE TORTURES VOLUNTARILY INFLICTED ON HIMSELF BY THE PENITENT YOGEE.

Theſe two ſtates may be conſidered as the laſt ſtage of the terreſtrial journey of the Metempſychoſis. With them the dreadful period of probation cloſes; with them the fire of the human ordeal is finally extinguiſhed. The word Saniaſſi, as explained in the Geeta, p. 124, ſignifies the forſaking of all actions which

which are desirable. If we might judge from the conduct of those who bear the name, it might with more truth be rendered the performing of all actions that can excite disgust and impress horror on the human soul. The word YOGEE, or, as some write it, JOGUE, is derived from a root signifying *devotion*. By the Saniassi is properly to be understood the Brahmin in his fourth and highest degree of spiritual discipline, prescribed in the Vedas for those of that cast who may possess fortitude of mind and vigour of body sufficient to undergo those excruciating severities, which, when resolutely persevered in to the last, have power to unbar the gates of eternity, and introduce the performer immediately into paradise. The Yogee is properly a voluntary penitent, who aspires to the honours and distinction of a Saniassi, and who endeavours to rival, if not exceed, him in the number and degree of his aggravated sufferings. All the writers of the ancient world, and most of the moderns, have confounded the two characters; and the name of Saniassi and Yogee have been promiscuously applied. The ancients, indeed, ranked all the race of these austere penitents under the title of gymnosophists, or *naked philosophers*. The Brahmin Saniassi, however, does not wander

 about

about entirely naked, although the Yogee rejects all covering, ſcorning, amidſt his divine abſorption, to beſtow one thought on the contemptible clay that holds in bondage his ſtruggling ſoul. I ſhall firſt delineate the rigid principles and deliberate cruelties inflicted on himſelf by the Saniaſſi. I ſhall then enter into rather an extenſive detail of what claſſical writers have related concerning the ancient gymnoſophiſt, and what, from modern writers and authentic living witneſſes, I have been able to collect relative to the romantic doctrines and eccentric practices of thoſe furious maniacs, the Yogees of the preſent day.

There is, as we have juſt intimated, an immenſe difference in the conduct of the devotee of the Brahmin caſt and that of a devotee of an inferior tribe. The Saniaſſi is diſtinguiſhed by the calm, the ſilent, dignity with which he ſuffers the ſeries of complicated evils through which he is ordained to toil: the Yogee is wild and deſultory in his devotion, and oſtentatious of the penances to which he voluntarily condemns himſelf. The former buries himſelf in the ſolitude of the deſert, and is content that God and his own ſoul are conſcious to the auſterities which he endures: the latter ſeeks the crowded *bazar*, or market-

place,

place, and delights to ſcourge and lacerate himſelf in the ſight of innumerable ſpectators. The profeſſed deſign of both, however, is to detach their thoughts from all concern about ſublunary objects; to be indifferent to hunger and thirſt; to be inſenſible to ſhame and reproach; and, as far as it is poſſible for beings who have not yet paſſed the bourn of mortality, to emancipate the ſoul from its tabernacle of clay.

The leading principle that ſways the mind of the Saniaſſi is by unexampled auſterities to ſubdue the body, becauſe he is convinced that ſubjugation of the paſſions will neceſſarily follow that conqueſt. He exults, therefore, in making the moſt painful ſacrifices that can ſhock agonizing nature. On entering this degree, he inſtantly, and without ſcruple, diſcards for ever the deareſt friend and the tendereſt relative. The affectionate wife, the blooming daughter, (for, the Saniaſſi is not always advanced in years,) in vain claſp his knees, and ſolicit him to relax in his dreadful purpoſe: he is deaf to their cries and callous to their tears; he throws away every article of dreſs, except a ſcanty linen cloth of a yellow colour which girds his waiſt, and, with a pitcher in one hand and a pilgrim's ſtaff in the

other, he hurries away to the defert, never to return. Famine and mifery are the companions of his folitude. Abforbed in profound meditation on the Deity, he never violates the facred filence in which his lips are fealed, except to pronounce the myftic word AWAN, which is the commencement of the Vedas,* His food is the fruits and herbage that fpontaneoufly fpring up in the defert: if thefe fail him, the laws of his fevere order permit him to go to the neareft village and beg a handful of boiled rice, or other food, which he eats on the fpot; if they throw it on the ground, he takes it up with his mouth, fwallowing only as much as will ferve to fuftain life. The fole bufinefs of that life is inceffant mental prayer and intenfe contemplation. Thefe they confider as uniting them intimately to the Deity, and enduing them with a portion of his power. Their energy is inexpreffible: it is felt through all the works of nature, and through all the claffes of exiftence. It can call down the ftars from heaven, and bring up dæmons from the loweft bobun of Naraka. To fuch a length does their fanaticifm on this point extend, as to lead them to conceive, that they can, by their united power, actually difembody

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 224.

difembody the foul, which for a while leaves its earthy manfion in utter infenfibility; and, after taking a wide æthereal flight, returns to animate the breathlefs clod.

A curious ftory of this kind is related by Father Bouchet, treating concerning the Metempfychofis, in the Lettres Edifiantes et Curieufes; which, on fuch a fubject, it would be unpardonable to omit, and which is as follows:

An ancient fovereign of India, by name Veramarken, having, by intenfe devotion, obtained this art of occafionally difengaging the foul from its terreftrial prifon, was fo delighted with his new acquifition, that, inftead of attending to the duties of his fplendid and important ftation upon this globe of earth, he was perpetually exploring the æthereal regions, and foaring amidft the fuperior orbs. At thofe periods, in which he meditated this aëreal excurfion, it was his practice to retire with only one confidential flave into the midft of a gloomy unfrequented grove, and to his care he configned, during the abfence of his foul, that inferior and contemptible portion of himfelf, which, however, decorated with royal robes and a refplendent crown, was accuftomed to fit upon the throne of Afia, and

was the object of little less than idolatry to the admiring crowd. A too frequent repetition of this practice, and an unguarded recital of the mystic prayer, called the MANDIRAM, by which his soul was released, in the hearing of the slave, excited a strong desire in the soul of the latter to undertake a similar flight into the æthereal regions. Attending diligently, therefore, to the actions of Veramarken, and precisely learning the words of the MANDIRAM, he resolved, the first opportunity, to attempt the temporary emancipation of his own soul; and, one day, when the monarch made a longer stay than usual in the æthereal fields, he fell to fervent prayer, and repeated the MANDIRAM, when, in an instant, his soul, taking its flight from his body, entered that of his master. He was now a king, and too well pleased with his new form and habiliments to think of returning to his former abject state. To prevent, therefore, his own body from being re-animated when the soul of Veramarken returned, he cut off its head, and stalked away to the palace in all the grandeur of arrogated royalty, where he received the honours due to his late master, and shared in his stead the embraces of his young and beautiful bride.

The

The ſoul of the degraded monarch now winged its flight towards the well-known grove, and its horror, as well at finding its own receptacle vaniſhed, as at beholding the headleſs trunk of the ſlave, may be conceived but cannot be expreſſed. However irkſome he might formerly have eſteemed human exiſtence, he now began to think, that a magnificent throne and a lovely conſort, added to the poſſeſſion of the great ſecret of the MANDIRAM, might ſtill have rendered tolerable the remaining years of its ſojourning in the veil of mortality. The reflection filled the penſive ſpirit with intolerable anguiſh; it kept hovering, all forlorn and penſive, amidſt the ſhades of that baleful grove, and made them reſound with its bitter wailings. At length the compaſſionate "goddeſs of his former devotion" (Bhavani we muſt ſuppoſe, the Indian Venus) prepared for the royal fugitive the beautiful body of a parrot, in which he ſped away to the court, alas! only to be the diſtracted witneſs of his ſlave ſeated on a throne which had deſcended to himſelf from a long line of illuſtrious anceſtors, and to ſee him ſhare the affectionate careſſes intended for Veramarken. As the hapleſs bird, under the impreſſion of theſe melancholy ſen-

timents, flew from one apartment to the other, he was caught by a domeſtic of the palace, and, for the admirable beauty of his plumage, preſented to the queen, who detained him priſoner in her own chamber; and thus was the unfortunate monarch, who had poſſeſſed a throne, and had ranged the ſkies, condemned to perpetual impriſonment, as well as to be a ſtill nearer ſpectator of the rights of a king and a huſband uſurped. The ſecret would never have been known, had not a holy Saniaſſi, who, by the power of abſorption, could penetrate into the paſt, the preſent, and the future, ſome ages after revealed it for the benefit of the ſovereigns of India, and as a warning to them not to put too much confidence in their favourites.

At all times the Saniaſſi beholds with indifference whatever excites human delight, or inſpires vulgar mortals with averſion and terror; but, when more particularly engaged at his devotions, there is no object in nature ſo horrible as in the ſmalleſt degree to appal him, nor ſo enchanting as for one moment to ſeduce his fixed affections from fervid contemplation of the ſupreme Brahme. The moſt dreadful thunders rolling over his head, balls of fire burſting from the tempeſtuous clouds and

and ploughing up the ground in every direction around him, even the earth itfelf convulfed and rocking beneath him, have no power to difmay the foul of the undaunted, the abforbed, Saniaffi. That foul is a native of a more elevated region, foars in a purer air, and revolves in a nobler fphere. The foul of the Saniaffi is with the Deity who made the worlds and commands the fubject elements.

It is the boaft of the Saniaffi to facrifice every human feeling and paffion at the fhrine of devotion. The rains, which, during the annual inundations, defcend in tropical regions with fuch refiftlefs violence, and fweep every thing before them, moleft not the inflexible devotee of the fouth; nor is the naked northern Anchorite obferved to fhiver amidft the inceffant fnows that fall upon the fummits of Heemacote, the ancient Imaus, and encircle up to his neck the human ftatue in the holy mountains of the Brahmins. Let a table be fpread with the moft delicious viands that ever charmed the eye or feafted the appetite of the daintieft epicure; place the table, thus abundantly and delicately fpread, before the Saniaffi; although he be emaciated with long-continued famine, and although at the

fame

ſame time he feel the ſharpeſt pangs of corroſive hunger, he will avert his eye from it with diſdain, or gaze upon the luxurious banquet with calm indifference. Let ſtrains of the moſt excellent melody warble around him, the paſſages of his ears are impervious to ſounds, which, in other breaſts, would awaken ecſtaſy and endanger reaſon. Let nymphs of the moſt tranſcendent beauty, blooming, lovely, and wanton, as thoſe that ſported of old with Creeſhna on the hallowed plains of Mathura, weave in his preſence the airy dance, the Saniaſſi is conſcious to no tumults of riſing paſſion, but continues, in thought and act,

Chaſte as the icicle
That's curdled by the froſt from pureſt ſnow,
And hangs on Dian's temple.

The moſt delicious odours, exhaled from the ſpice-beds of a garden of Oriental perfumes, have no fragrance for him; to the moſt beautiful colours he is *blind*; amidſt the moſt excruciating torments he is *dumb*.

In effect, by long continued perſeverance in theſe laborious but unnatural efforts to ſubdue his *mortal part*, the corporeal functions by degrees loſe their energy, and the mental faculties are clouded and overwhelmed. Grown torpid

torpid through inactivity, and wrapt in holy insensibility, the Saniassi is affected by nothing that occurs within the bounded circle of human nature. He has no interest in any object below the stars, the native region of his aspiring soul. In vain, therefore, to him do the seasons revolve on this terrestrial globe; in vain does the sun enlighten it with his all-vivifying ray; in vain do the nutritious dews and genial showers descend and fertilize it. He feels no more delight, when returning spring arrays its renovated aspect in beauty and verdure, than he is capable of emotion, when its arid surface is parched with continued drought, and the famished herd perish by thousands on the sterile plains. He is no more refreshed by the cooling zephyr that wafts vigour and salubrity to its fainting inhabitants, than he is annoyed by the burning winds from the desert, that bring pestilence and death in their train, and sweep whole nations of his fellow-creatures to the gulph of destruction.

Inflexibly adhering to this resolute indifference, the avenues of his soul are barred against the insidious assaults of those delusive passions that secretly undermine and often subvert the fortitude of the sublimest philosophers

phers and the moſt rigid diſciplinarians. He is no more to be ſoothed by the ſuggeſtions of *adulation* in its moſt pleaſing form, than he is to be terrified by the loudeſt clamours of *reproach*. *Ambition* and *power* can have no influence over the man who looks down upon thrones with ſcorn, who conſiders the ſcanty and tattered fragment of yellow linen that girds his loins as of value far more tranſcendent than the embroidered robe of majeſty; and who looks upon himſelf to be a portion of that Deity, into whoſe infinite eſſence he is ſoon to be wholly and eternally abſorbed. *Avarice* cannot influence the mind that is rich in the countleſs treaſures of immortality; a mind that eſteems gold as droſs, and to whom rubies have loſt their luſtre and value. In fine, the higheſt diſtinction, to which the Saniaſſi aſpires, is a ſtate of invincible apathy. By long habits of indifference, he becomes inanimate as a piece of wood or ſtone; and, though he mechanically reſpires the vital air, he is to all the purpoſes of active life *defunct*. In conſequence of theſe unexampled ſeverities, and this invincible abſtraction from every thing finite, the veneration which the whole Indian nation entertain for the Saniaſſis is beyond all conception. Veeſhnu himſelf re-

veres them: to whatſoever object they touch they impart ſanctity, and the very duſt of their feet is conſecrated, from the ſteeps of Caucaſus to the point of Comorin!!!

CHAPTER IV.

The Soul, paſſing through its ſeveral Stages of Probation in the Veil of Mortality, not inelegantly compared by the Ancients to the AURELIA, *and the various Viciſſitudes which that beautiful Inſect undergoes in its Progreſs to Maturity.—The natural Hiſtory of the* CHRYSALIS, *or* AURELIA, *conſidered, which neceſſarily and immediately introduces the noble Greek Allegory of* CUPID *and* PSYCHE, *of an Origin undoubtedly* ASIATIC.—*The ſublime Moral, evidently intended to be inculcated through the Whole of that Allegory, explained by Reference to numerous Gems and Sculptures of Antiquity, of beautiful Deſign and elaborate Execution.*

THIS anxious impatience, this ardent fever, of the ſoul panting after its immortal reſt, and aſcending progreſſively through the ſtages of purity to that final abode, THE DEITY; theſe inceſſant efforts of the devout Brahmins to ſtifle every ebullition of human paſſion, and live upon earth as if they

they were already, and in reality, difembodied, cannot fail to remind the claffical reader of the noble and beautiful allegory, recorded in Apuleius and other ancient writers, relative to the fufferings of the charming Ψυχη, or Pfyche. This celeftial progeny, Pfyche, or, in other words, the *human foul perfonified*, was generally reprefented by the ancients under the form of a beautiful young virgin with the wings of a butterfly; and, fometimes, on antique gems and marbles, fhe is portrayed under the form of the aurelia itfelf, in the natural hiftory of which infect we may difcover the reafon as well as the force of the comparifon. The general outline of that hiftory is, in brief, as follows: — The aurelia is, in the firft ftage of its exiftence, a common grub, or worm, and lies, during the winter, in a ftate of torpor, apparently dead. When the genial fpring renovates nature, it burfts its prifon, and iffues forth, as it were, to new life, arrayed in beautiful attire. The Egyptians thought this a juft and ftriking emblem of the human foul, which, after a long imprifonment in a human form, at length burfts its terreftrial bonds, and emerges into immortality. Such, I fay, is the *general* outline of that hiftory; but, having confidered the fubject

ject with ſome degree of attention, and truſting that I can place ſome parts of the parallel between the human ſoul and the aurelia in a new point of view, I ſhall not be afraid of diſguſting my readers by entering into a more particular detail, relative to the growth and maturity of that inſect. The whole myſterious fable, likewiſe, of CUPID and PSYCHE is ſo congenial with theſe Indian fictions, concerning the excruciating ſeverities to be endured by the tranſmigrating ſoul, that I hope they will pardon my introducing it into theſe pages, ſince the title of my book profeſſes to compare the leading features of the mythology of Egypt, Perſia, and Greece.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE AURELIA AND THE FABLE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE CONSIDERED.

From the circumſtance of the aurelia occurring, in moſt of the myſtical writers of antiquity, as the pictureſque emblem of the ſoul paſſing through the various ſtages of a mortal to an immortal ſtate, there is great reaſon to believe thoſe theological philoſophers had vigilantly marked all the wonderful viciſſitudes

which the chryfalis fucceffively undergoes, and were fcarcely lefs acquainted with its hiftory than the curious and exploring fons of modern philofophy. The firft ftate of the chryfalis is a ftate nearly approaching to infenfibility; it fcarcely appears to be endued with life; its figure is conical; it has neither legs to walk nor wings to fly, and it can take no nourifhment, for it has no organs to receive or digeft it. Is not this a juft picture of the human foul in infancy, when it refts, as it were, dormant in its prifon of clay, incapable of exertion, and infenfible to the dictates of inftruction and wifdom?

Brought forth amidft the autumnal gloom, and chilled by the ungenial damps and rigours of that inclement feafon, the embryo-aurelia remains in this inactive ftate during the early wintry months. As the cold and darknefs of winter pafs away, and the fun begins to exert its power both on the animal and vegetable creation, the apparently-infenfible atom fhews fome principles of life, and, gradually fhedding its coat, or fkin, and putting on a more brilliant hue, it begins to feed on the tender fpringing herbage of the infant year. The variety and exquifite beauty of the colours of the different fpecies of the cater-

pillar

pillar in this ftate are infinite and admirable. Some of them are fuperbly clothed in brilliant gold, whence, in fact, they obtain the name of chryfalis, from χρυσος, gold, as they are called aurelia, from *aurum*; and it is this brilliant infect by which principally the ancients intended to fymbolize the foul, that radiant emanation of the Divinity in man. Some are of an elegant green colour, others of a beautiful and bright yellow. They fucceffively change thefe colours as they advance towards maturity through the different ftages of a caterpillar, a chryfalis, and a butterfly; and, by this change, as well as by that of their external coat, exhibit ample evidence of that *metamorphofis* actually taking place, which formed the bafis of the pleafing fables of the ancients on this fubject. As the vernal feafon increafes, the aurelia alfo increafes in vigour, fprightlinefs, and magnitude, till, at length, its tender wings burfting from the membranous integument that confined them, it mounts into the air a perfect butterfly, and joyfully fpreads its richly-variegated pinions to the fun.

May not the aurelia, in this improved ftage of its exiftence, be confidered as a ftriking emblem of the foul arrived at the period of

maturity in the human ſtate, when education has lent all its aid to expand the daring genius and ripen to perfection the fervid thought; when man, liberated from the reſtrictions of grave tutors and the fetters of parental authority, launches forth into the vaſt ocean of life, and ranges uncontrolled whereſoever his inclination leads him? This the ancients eſteemed the period of the greateſt danger; in this ſtate are felt the moſt furious aſſaults of the various paſſions, thoſe vultures of the ſoul, each alternately exerting its baneful influence to haraſs it in its terreſtrial journey, to ſtagger its reſolution, and undermine all the principles of virtue. Ambition fires it with the deſire of unbounded ſway, avarice entangles it in a thouſand ſordid and perplexing cares, envy ſtimulates it to the perpetration of baſe and criminal deſigns, while love, all-conquering love, renders it its abject ſlave. To guard the ſpiritual pilgrim from the deſpotiſm of the laſt-named tyrant, was the principal purpoſe of the ancient theologiſts in the following beautiful allegory of Cupid and Pſyche, which I have abridged from Apuleius, it being of ſuch a length as to engroſs nearly the whole of the fifth and ſixth book of the Metamorphoſeos of that author.

In

In a certain city, ſays Apuleius, there lived a king and queen, who were bleſt with three daughters, all of great beauty; but the youngeſt, in that point, infinitely outſhone the two others. Her charms, indeed, were ſo tranſcendent, that nature ſeemed to have exhauſted all her ſkill in forming her. The fame of this the moſt lovely creature whom human eye had ever beheld ran rapidly through all the neighbouring regions, and multitudes flocked from all quarters to admire and adore. All that ſaw her exclaimed, with rapture, that Venus in perſon was come down from heaven to viſit mankind; and the rites of Cnidos, Paphos, and Cythera, were transferred to the city, ſanctified by the reſidence of the matchleſs virgin. *Sacra deæ (Veneris) deſeruntur, templa deformantur, pulvinaria proteruntur, ceremoniæ negliguntur, incoronata ſimulacbra, et aræ viduæ frigido cinere fœdatæ.** The real Venus, equally incenſed and indignant at this treatment, and jealous of her too-fortunate rival, incites her ſon Cupid to revenge the wrongs of his mother. "My beloved Cupid," ſays the diſtracted parent, "a preſumptuous mortal dares to conteſt with me the palm of beauty, and uſurps the rites paid at the altars

* Apuleii Metamorph. lib. iv. p. 90, edit Bipont. Oct. 1788.

of thy native Paphos: oh! fly inftantly to the detefted city of her abode, arm thyfelf with one of thy keeneft arrows, and, pointing it to her heart, let her languifh in all the agonies of unpitied love: or, if that be impoffible, from the refiftlefs influence of her charms, let her affections be fixed on fome worthlefs monfter in the form of a man, who may be equally diftinguifhed for his crimes and his poverty, who may inflict on her the moft unheard-of cruelties, and render her the moft miferable, as fhe is the moft beautiful, of her fex." Cupid, obedient to the ftern mandate, immediately hafted away to the palace of Pfyche's father, his bow was bent, and the fhaft, charged full of the foft poifon of love, was ready to be launched at the unfufpecting fair: the fight, however, of fuch amazing beauty difarmed the furious young deity. His hand trembled, his foot faultered, and he became the victim of thofe charms of which he intended to have been the deftroyer.

In the mean time Pfyche, though gazed at, admired, and praifed, by all, feemed to be doomed to wafte the bloom of youth in barren celibacy. Her beauty was of that nature (for, in fact, Pfyche is only the virtuous principle in the foul perfonified) that it infpired reveren-

tial

tial awe rather than kindled ardent attachment in the beholder. Even thoſe, who were inflamed with affection for her, dared not approach the idol of their devotion, nor preſumed to aſk her hand in marriage. Although, therefore, her ſiſters, who were of more acceſſible beauty, were married to two powerful ſovereigns, the lovely, the forlorn, Pſyche could gain no ſuitor of any rank; but, like ſome ſilent ſolitary ſtatue, ſurveyed only with delight for its admirable ſymmetry, received not the careſſes of nuptial love, nor glowed with the fervour of mutual affection. The wearisome day was conſumed in ſighs; her pillow by night was bathed with tears: ſhe ſometimes bewailed aloud her miſerable ſituation; nor forbore, at others, to execrate that diſtinguiſhed beauty, the luſtre of which ſubjected her to ſo hard a fate.

Penetrated with anguiſh at the diſtreſs of their diſconſolate daughter, anxious for the reſtoration of her tranquillity, and fearful leſt her health ſhould be injured by her continual grief, her royal parents conſult the Delphic oracle upon her unhappy caſe, and the dreadful mandate of Apollo could not fail to inſpire both their own minds, and that of the

tender Pſyche, with grief and horror inexpreſſible.

> Montis in excelſi ſcopulo deſiſte puellam,
> Ornatam mundo funerei thalami, &c. &c.*

"Let the maid be conveyed to the rocky ſummit of a lofty mountain, and there arrayed, not in bridal robes, but in funeral ornaments; and, wrapt in the ſhroud of death, let her await the huſband ſhe ſo anxiouſly ſolicits." She is not doomed to marry any being of mortal deſcent;

> Sed ſævum atque ferum, vipereumque malum,

"but a being fierce, implacable, and malignant as the viper;" a being terrible on earth and formidable to the gods themſelves.†

The moral of the allegory hitherto muſt be evident to the meaneſt capacity: it is the virtuous principle of the human ſoul overcome by concupiſcence, that is, carnal affection as oppoſed to ſpiritual, and the puniſhment we ſee rapidly follows. The indulgence of ſenſual paſſions is the death of that virtuous principle: the ſoul itſelf becomes defunct in a moral ſenſe, and therefore Pſyche is to be veiled

* See Apuleii Metamorph. p. 93. † Ibid.

veiled in a ſhroud, and expoſed to do penance on a high and deſolate mountain.

By this dreadful oracle, not only the royal family but the whole city was overwhelmed with grief and conſternation. All claſſes of people made the cauſe of Pſyche their own, and every quarter reſounded with cries and lamentations. It was, however, indiſpenſably neceſſary, after conſulting the god, punctually to obey his ſublime, though ſtern, beheſt. The funeral ſolemnities and the deathful robe were prepared; the day was fixed for the performance of this grand ſacrifice of a beautiful virgin to DEATH and HYMEN, whoſe torches were now, for the firſt time, to unite their flames, and gleam on the ſtupified populace their dreadful glare. At length that day arrived; and both court and city, moving forward in one vaſt cavalcade of woe, accompanied Pſyche to the fatal mountain. Steeped in tears, and torn with inexpreſſible agony, ſhe ſlowly proceeded to the ſolemnization of what were to be at once her bridal and funeral rites. The original is highly beautiful: *et lacbrymoſa Pſyche comitatur non nuptias, ſed exſequias ſuas.*

Arrived at the ſpot marked out by the oracle, which was the higheſt eminence of the mountain,

mountain, ſhe was there left by her miſerable parents and the ſorrowing multitude, who, returning to the city, gave way to the violence of their grief as for a beloved relative deceaſed, and both the walls of the palace and the private houſes of the citizens were hung with ſable, in token of reſpect to her memory. In the mean time, Pſyche, deeply regretting her paſt impatience under the reſtraints of virtuous celibacy, remained in her lofty exiled ſituation in a ſtate of the utmoſt ſuſpenſe and anxiety. It was not long before a zephyr embraced the trembling fair one, and bore her, gently gliding through the air, into the boſom of a ſpacious valley, rich with verdure and fragrant with flowers. Here, reclined upon a bed of ſoft aromatic herbage, the tumult of her mind gradually ſubſided, her fears were diſſipated, and her ſenſes enlivened. After a ſhort repoſe, curioſity induced her to riſe and explore the receſſes of a ſpacious wood adjoining, where muſic, more ſweet than mortal ever before heard, warbled from the branches, and fountains of the pureſt water perpetually played, cooling and refreſhing the air, heated by the beams of a meridian ſun. Proceeding farther, ſhe entered a ſtately palace, the roofs of which glittered with gold and ſilver; while its

its variegated pavement ſparkled with precious ſtones of the lovelieſt hue and the richeſt brilliancy. What appeared to her moſt wonderful of all was, that this beautiful palace was without an owner; for, as ſhe wandered through its rich ſaloons, no human being met her *eye*, though the moſt melodious voices from inviſible forms accoſted her *ear*, inceſſantly inviting her to make that palace her conſtant reſidence, to bathe by day, without reſtraint, in its ambroſial fountains, and repoſe by night, without fear, on its gilded ſofas; ſofas of a texture far ſofter than the ſpringing down of the cygnet, for, the ſilk which formed them was woven in a celeſtial loom. Deriving confidence from this ſoothing addreſs, Pſyche now ſat down to partake of a banquet prepared by the ſame inviſible agents. The moſt elegant viands were ſucceſſively ſerved up in golden diſhes, and wines of exquiſite flavour ſparkled before her in agate vaſes. To this miraculous banquet ſucceeded concerts of ſoft muſic from immortal harps, whoſe tender thrilling ſtrains pierced the ſoul of the delighted virgin, and diſſolved it in voluptuous languor. Theſe were but a prelude to the refined pleaſures of nuptial love, which, with advancing night, were rapidly approaching;

approaching; when Pſyche, with mingled terror and tranſport, was to claſp the myſterious huſband promiſed her by heaven.

The ſtar of evening, friendly to Hymen, already began to glimmer on high in the blue vault of heaven. Fatigued with the alternate ſufferings and joy, produced by the wonderful viciſſitudes of the paſt day, and deriving ſome gleams of hope from what ſhe had already experienced, yet ſtill trembling at the dreadful oracle, Pſyche at length retired to the nuptial bed, which her unſeen attendants had prepared, ſprinkled with odours and decorated with flowers. The ſolitude of the ſcene, and the darkneſs of ſurrounding night, added to her perplexity, and filled with unutterable ſolicitude the throbbing boſom of the virgin. After a ſhort interval of dreadful ſuſpenſe, a voice, benign and ſoothing, bade her diſmiſs unneceſſary terror, and, in an inſtant, ſhe found herſelf locked in the fond embrace of a huſband, who, though unknown, inſpired no terror; but, on the contrary, whoſe precipitate retreat, on the approach of day, filled her with concern and grief. Inviſible nymphs now hover around the deſerted bed, who, with harmonious voices, hail the new bride, and invite her to a

repetition

repetition of the pleaſures of the preceding day. She ranges with freſh delight through the delicious gardens and all the apartments of that magnificent palace; ſhe liſtens to the warbling of the birds and the murmuring of the fountains; ſhe again bathes in the ſtream her beauteous limbs, ſits down to the delicious repaſt, is regaled with muſic by celeſtial bands, and, at night, no longer reluctant, retires to the ſame bed, and again enjoys the embrace of her affectionate, but fugitive, huſband.

A long period elapſed in this unceaſing round of daily pleaſure, and this nightly commerce with a bridegroom, whom as yet ſhe had not beheld. All remembrance of her former ſufferings was eraſed from her mind, while her inviſible attendants prevented her feeling the tedium of ſolitude and the abſence of her lord during the day, by perpetually varying the amuſements of the enchanting paradiſe that held her a willing priſoner. Her happineſs might have continued for ever could ſhe have KEPT A SECRET, or reſtrained within due bounds that fatal CURIOSITY which too often betrays the unthinking part of her ſex into errors never to be remedied.

Anxiety for the fate of their daughter had long baniſhed repoſe from the boſom of her diſconſolate parents. They prevailed on her two ſiſters to undertake the taſk of exploring her retreat; and the latter repaired, without delay, to the deſolate mountain, on whoſe ſummit ſhe had been expoſed. The ſame gentle zephyr, that had conveyed Pſyche to the happy valley, was alſo ready to conduct her ſiſters to that ſecluded ſpot, and they were ſoon wafted to the palace of delights. Pſyche had been forewarned, by her nightly paramour, of their intended viſit, and, at firſt, received his ſtrict injunctions not to have any communion with them, as the interview might be productive of the moſt dreadful calamities to all parties. She promiſed to obey thoſe injunctions; but growing, in conſequence, dejected and melancholy, ſhe obtained his permiſſion to entertain them. The adventurous princeſſes were received with tranſport, ſhewn all the rarities of the caſtle, and diſmiſſed to the court of their royal parents, but with the aſſurance that ſhe was the happieſt of women, and wedded to a huſband, young, beautiful, finely accompliſhed, and ardently attached to her.

Burning with envy at her happy lot, theſe ungrateful ſiſters ſoon began to plot the ruin of the generous and unſuſpecting Pſyche. They took an opportunity of repeating their viſit; and, inſidiouſly inquiring into particulars concerning that huſband, on whoſe charms ſhe had ſo rapturouſly deſcanted, learned from her anſwers the fatal ſecret of his viſiting her only during the night-ſeaſon, and that ſhe was a ſtranger to the ſight, though not to the embrace, of her beloved conſort. Having obtained this clue, theſe harpies in a female form retired to plan their diabolical project of plunging in inexpreſſible miſery an amiable and affectionate ſiſter; who, however, was again kindly cautioned by her huſband not to liſten to their artful and baſe inſinuations to his prejudice. At their next interview, therefore, they alarmed her with dreadful apprehenſions relating to the almoſt-forgotten oracle of Apollo, which had deſtined her to the arms of a monſter, malignant and venomous as a viper; and they perſuaded her, that, under the aſſumed appearance of a young man, in the bloom of life, ſhe was actually married to a monſtrous ſerpent, who, when ſatiated with her charms, would not fail to inflict upon her unheard-of cruelties, and finally

finally put her to a miſerable death. Struck with horror at this intimation, unable to account for her huſband's continued reluctance to diſcover himſelf, and, at the ſame time, comparing the oracle with the nocturnal viſit and clandeſtine embrace, Pſyche confeſſed herſelf overcome by the force of their repreſentation, and earneſtly implored their advice towards extricating herſelf from the danger of impending deſtruction. The counſel given by her ſiſters was, that ſhe ſhould ſecretly convey a lighted lamp and a razor into ſome obſcure receſs of the chamber in which they ſlept; that, when the monſter's eyes were ſealed in ſlumber, ſhe ſhould, with the former, take the prohibited ſurvey of his perſon, and, with the latter, ſever his head from his body. By this reſolute act alone could ſhe avoid the miſerable end to which ſhe was, otherwiſe, inevitably devoted. The terrified Pſyche promiſed compliance, and the princeſſes were again wafted back by the obedient zephyr. Pſyche, determined faithfully to execute their pernicious counſels, concealed in her chamber the lamp which was to reveal, and the razor which was to immolate, her ſleeping huſband. The inſtant his eyes were cloſed, ſhe ſtole ſoftly from his ſide, and ſeizing, with impatience,

tience, the concealed lamp, hurried to the bed-ſide to gratify herſelf with a ſurvey ſo long and rigidly denied, and diſpatch at once her intended murderer. She elevates the lamp, and, by its light, diſcovers no formidable monſter, no envenomed ſerpent, but the lovely, the enchanting, Cupid, the god of young deſires, conſpicuous by the vermilion that glowed on his cheek and lips, by the purple hue of his waving wings, and by the exquiſite beauty of his yellow treſſes. The raſhneſs and cruelty of the bloody act ſhe was about to perpetrate overwhelmed her with horror, and filled her boſom with remorſe and anguiſh inexpreſſible. She gazed upon him again and again with renewed delight, and ſhe would have plunged in her own throat the fatal weapon, but, in the midſt of her perturbation, it had fallen out of her languid graſp. At the foot of the bed lay the bow and arrows of the juvenile god. She admired the elegance of the workmanſhip, and, trying the point of one of the arrows, ſhe unfortunately wounded her finger. That wound, however, was trivial compared with the greater one which now rankled in her heart, and ſhe continued fixing her enraptured eyes upon the ſleeping god. As ſhe advanced nearer him,

by fatal mifchance, a drop of burning oil, from the lamp which fhe held in her hand, fell upon the right fhoulder of Cupid, who, being awaked by the anguifh of the wound, immediately fpread his wings for flight. In vain did Pfyche attempt to arreft that flight by entreaty, by tears, and by forcibly grafping his feet. The frowning deity, fpringing up into the air, raifed her up with him a little way, and then let her fall to the ground. Alighting upon a cyprefs-tree that grew near, from its funereal boughs, the emblem of his *deceafed affection*, he bitterly upbraided her for her curiofity and want of confidence in his counfels: he then fled away and entirely difappeared.

The anguifh, which, upon this event, feized the mind of Pfyche, it is impoffible to defcribe. No gentle voices, from invifible attendants, now foothed her extreme affliction; no mufic, from immortal harps, warbled fweet fymphonies in her ear. All was hufhed, all was filent, as death and midnight. On a fudden, while fhe ftood wringing her hands in frantic grief, a thunder-ftorm, burfting on the palace, fhivered it to atoms; and the garden of delights was converted into a blafted and barren heath, through which an

impetuous

impetuous river rolled. Into that river ſhe inſtantly plunged, in the fond hope of burying herſelf and all her miſeries in the friendly wave. But the final period of thoſe miſeries was not yet arrived; and the river, out of reſpect to the wife of Cupid, immediately threw her back upon the banks. Preſently after ſhe ſees the god Pan, and ſolicits his advice. Pan condoles with her, but acquaints her there is no hope for her unleſs ſhe can make her peace with Cupid. In purſuit of the injured deity, ſhe continues for a long time wandering about the earth; and, in the courſe of her peregrination, ſhe meets with one of thoſe ſiſters, whoſe perfidious counſel was the cauſe of her ruin, and upon whom, therefore, ſhe was determined to be revenged. She recites to her the ſtory of her melancholy adventures; informs her that Cupid had repudiated her as a puniſhment for her curioſity; and, moreover, had threatened, as a more ſignal infliction of his vengeance upon herſelf, to marry one of her ſiſters. Inflamed with hope that ſhe might be the intended bride, her ambitious ſiſter immediately hurried away to the rocky eminence, whence ſhe had formerly been wafted to the palace of Cupid; and, not doubting but that the ſame

zephyr would ſafely tranſport her thither, ſhe let herſelf drop down from the ſummit, and was daſhed in pieces on the rocks below. Shortly after, meeting the other ſiſter, ſhe deluded her with the ſame ſtory, and ſhe alſo miſerably periſhed in the ſame ſnare. In this reſpect, Pſyche was not actuated by the dictates of her accuſtomed benevolence; but, let it be remembered, her wrongs were trying and aggravated; and, when once VIRTUE is fled, RAGE and REVENGE, with a thouſand other turbulent paſſions, ruſh in, unreſiſted, upon the defenceleſs ſoul.

In the mean time, Venus, incenſed beyond meaſure both at the failure of her ſcheme for Pſyche's deſtruction, and at the torments which Cupid ſuffered from his wound, reſolved to find out her rival upon earth, and inflict upon her the moſt exemplary vengeance. That unhappy exile was ſtill traverſing the earth in ſearch of her dear Cupid, and accidentally coming to a temple of Ceres, ſhe collected, from a neighbouring corn-field, a few ears of looſe grain, and devoutly offered them up to that goddeſs, earneſtly entreating her to take an unhappy female under her protection, and ſhield her from the menaced fury of the mother of Cupid. Ceres vouchſafed her no

other anſwer than that ſhe would not be actively hoſtile to her, nor betray the path of her flight to Venus. She met with nearly the ſame reply from Juno, at whoſe ſhrine ſhe afterwards paid homage, and offered ſacrifice. At length ſhe reſolved to proſtrate herſelf before the cruel Venus herſelf, with whom it was poſſible ſhe might find Cupid, who, ſhe flattered herſelf, would relent at her tears, and prevail on his mother to relent alſo. In both theſe expectations ſhe was cruelly diſappointed; for, when ſhe came to her temple, the haughty vindictive goddeſs refuſed to receive, as a ſuppliant, her whoſe crimes no repentance could obliterate, no prayers atone for, no tears expunge. She was determined to ſeize her as a victim, but *that* ſhe thought beneath her dignity to do at a time when ſhe came to her altars in a humble and ſupplicating poſture. She therefore aſcended Olympus, and entreated Jupiter to diſpatch Mercury to bring Pſyche before her as a guilty criminal deſtined to appeaſe the vengeance of an inſulted goddeſs.

Before the ſwift Mercury could execute his cruel miſſion, Custom, one of the confidential domeſtics of Venus, happened to meet with Pſyche, and, ſeizing her, dragged her

by the hair of her head to her miſtreſs. Venus, the inſtant ſhe ſaw her rival, in a paroxyſm of rage, flew at her, tore her beautiful and flowing treſſes, and rent in pieces her ſilken robe; violently beating her about the head and wounding that face whoſe exquiſite beauty had won from her ſo many admirers. But this was not all, Pſyche was now under the abſolute dominion of Venus, (ILLICIT LOVE,) who makes mere drudges of her votaries, and SUBJECTS THEM TO THE MOST PAINFUL AND TOILSOME SERVITUDE.

The firſt taſk which Venus, the *mater ſæva cupidinum*, impoſed upon the beautiful Pſyche, was to ſeparate into diſtinct parcels an immenſe heap of grains intermixed, conſiſting of wheat, barley, millet, poppies, peas, lentils, and beans, all promiſcuouſly jumbled together. She was enjoined to perform this tedious and difficult taſk before night, and Venus appointed two others of her attendants, SORROW and ANXIETY, to be her vigilant guardians and companions. Pſyche was thunderſtruck at this ſevere injunction, to perform, within ſo ſhort a period, what ſhe conceived to be totally impracticable in the courſe of a prolonged life, and remained, for ſome time, in ſtupid inſenſibility. But a brood of

of induſtrious ants, who tenanted a neighbouring hillock, hearing the injunction, took compaſſion upon her, and ſeparated the grain for her within the allotted time. The ſecond taſk enjoined her was to fetch her ſevere tyrant a lock of golden wool from certain ſheep that fed on the ſteep and almoſt-inacceſſible banks of a broad and rapid river, which muſt be paſſed before ſhe could reach the demanded object. Pſyche, deſpairing of being able either to paſs the ſtream, or obtain the lock of golden wool, was juſt on the point of again attempting to drown herſelf, when a reed ſoftly whiſpered certain articulate ſounds, from which ſhe learned how to get poſſeſſion of the wool without danger, which ſhe in conſequence obtained, and exultingly bore to Venus. All this ready and punctual performance of taſks, ſcarcely practicable by human nature, was of no avail; Venus ſeemed to riſe in the ſeverity of her injunctions, in proportion to the promptitude of Pſyche to execute them; and ſhe now orders her to fetch her a pitcher of black and deadly water that iſſued from a fountain guarded by dragons. As ſhe was conſidering with herſelf how this, the moſt terrible of her mandates yet iſſued, was to be accompliſhed, an eagle, pouncing down from

 above,

above, with his talons ſnatched the pitcher from her trembling hand, then, ſoaring away to the appointed fountain, filled it, and brought it back to Pſyche, who carried it to Venus, and hoped that now, at leaſt, her labours and ſorrows would have their final conſummation. But what pencil can adequately paint the horrors of the exhauſted Pſyche, when, inſtead of being inſtantly admitted to her forgiveneſs and the enjoyment of her former communion with Cupid, ſhe received immediate and poſitive orders to viſit the gloomy ſubterraneous regions of Pluto, and requeſt of Proſerpine a caſket which might contain a portion of the beauty of the Stygian queen, to repair what Venus herſelf had loſt by her anxiety and exertion in curing the wound of Cupid. She was commanded to uſe diſpatch on this embaſſy, ſince there was ſhortly to be an aſſembly of the gods, in which it was impoſſible for Venus to appear with beauty the leaſt impaired. Pſyche, ignorant of any other way of viſiting the infernal region than by death, interpreted this order into an injunction to kill herſelf, to which, being now plunged into the utmoſt grief and deſpair, ſhe was by no means reluctant. To effect her own deſtruction with equal ſpeed

and

and certainty, ſhe immediately aſcended a ſteep tower, with intent to throw herſelf headlong from it, and thus terminate her career of miſery; but, juſt as ſhe was on the point of executing her raſh reſolution, the benevolent, but inviſible, genius, who had hitherto attended her through all her ſufferings, addreſſed her in an audible voice from the tower, and bade her go to Tænarus, near Lacedæmon, where ſhe would find a paſſage by which ſhe might deſcend to the infernal regions; enjoining her rigidly to obſerve the following inſtructions during her journey thither and her return.

She was ordered to provide herſelf with two cakes, (and the reader will recollect that cakes and water are at this day offered in India to the dead,) bearing one of them in each hand; ſhe was likewiſe to carry with her two pieces of money, which were to be borne in her mouth; ſhe was told that if ſhe accidentally met in her way to the ſhades any perſon who might be in diſtreſs, and crave her aſſiſtance, not to take any notice, but to obſerve a religious ſilence, and purſue her journey; that, when ſhe arrived at the infernal river, and Charon demanded his fee for ferrying her over, one of the pieces of money which ſhe carried

ried was his allotted fee, which ſhe muſt ſuffer him to take out of her mouth; that ſhe muſt paſs without notice the numerous crowds of departed ſpirits who would cover the banks of Styx, and ſolicit relief from her; and that, when arrived at the gate of Proſerpine's palace, ſhe muſt give one of the cakes to the great dog that guarded it, who would let her paſs into the interior court. She was informed that Proſerpine would receive her with great kindneſs, and invite her to a noble entertainment, of which, however, ſhe muſt by no means partake, but, ſitting down upon the ground, make her ſolitary and abſtemious repaſt upon black bread. She muſt then inform her of the occaſion of her viſit to that infernal kingdom, and, having ſolicited and received the precious caſket, muſt hurry back with it to the regions of day.

On her return, ſhe muſt pacify Cerberus with the other cake, and fee Charon with the remaining piece of money, but muſt take eſpecial care, during her return, not to be ſeduced by any conſideration whatever to open the caſket containing the portion of beauty ſent by Proſerpine to Venus. Pſyche ſucceſſfully executed her dangerous errand, and punctually obeyed all the injunctions given her

except

except the laſt; to obſerve *that* with equal fidelity proved too much for the powerful operations of female VANITY. She could not reſiſt the inclination to examine the caſket, and appropriate to herſelf a ſmall particle, at leaſt, of the beauty intended to adorn the mother of Cupid.

Ah! too deluſive vanity, of what nameleſs evils, in every age, haſt thou been the unfortunate ſource to the young and beautiful! With adventurous hand, in a luckleſs hour, the curious Pſyche opened the caſket, which, like the box of Pandora, contained nothing but miſery for its ill-fated poſſeſſor. Inſtead of the roſe of eternal youth, inſtead of the bloom of unfading beauty, that caſket was ſtored only with a deadly, infernal, ſoporiferous, vapour, which in an inſtant overpowered all her faculties, and ſhe ſunk down upon the earth in a profound ſlumber. In that lethargic ſlumber ſhe lay for ſome time, nor ever would have awaked from it, had not Cupid, now fully appeaſed and healed of his wound, fled out of the windows of his mother's palace, to ſeek his dear, his long-loſt, Pſyche. His wonder was as great as his anguiſh was exquiſite, when he, at length, diſcovered her lying faſt aſleep upon the ground; but, immediately divining the

the caufe, he exerted the portion of divinity which he enjoyed by being the offspring of a deity, and burft the charm that bound her. He waked her by gently wounding her with the point of his arrow; he collected together the fumes of the deadly vapour which had iffued, and, returning them to the fatal cafket, bade her carry it to his mother. He himfelf, in the mean time, winged his flight to heaven, and laid the whole affair before Jupiter. Jupiter immediately called an affembly of the gods, and, with the awful nod that fhakes Olympus, not only himfelf confented to his marriage with Pfyche, but infifted that Venus fhould no longer oppofe their union. Mercury was difpatched in hafte to bring Pfyche up to heaven, and, *the period of her terreftrial fojourning and probation being over*, fhe drank ambrofia, and became IMMORTAL. On occafion of her apotheofis and nuptials, a magnificent banquet was prepared in heaven, at which all the gods were prefent, at which Apollo played upon the harp, and even Venus herfelf danced. Pfyche, thus folemnly reunited to Cupid, commenced a new career of happinefs, not fubject to interruption or decay; and the fruit of her renovated affection was a daughter named PLEASURE; that is, celeftial

leſtial and eternal pleaſure, oppoſed to that which is earthly and temporal.*

The general moral, intended to be inculcated throughout the preceding fable, muſt be obvious to the reader, although many of the circumſtances recorded in it, being introduced merely for the ſake of ornament, no direct or particular application can be made of every part of it. We can, however, collect from it, on the whole, that the ancient Greeks, like the Brahmins, conceived there was no greater enemy to the ſoul, aſpiring to the heights of purity and virtue, than carnal affection, ſymbolized by Venus, whoſe ſervant CUSTOM drags us on againſt our better inclinations and reſolutions to criminal indulgence, and then delivers us over, by the command of her miſtreſs, to be tormented by her two other ſervants, SORROW and ANXIETY. There are variety of deſigns, on ancient gems and marbles, which ſtill more ſtrikingly and diſtinctly explain their meaning on this point, and many of theſe may be ſeen in Mountfaucon and other collections. On theſe ſculptures Pſyche is invariably deſignated with the wings of a butterfly, and ſometimes a Cupid is repreſented as burning her wings, thoſe wings on which ſhe ſhould mount

* Apuleii Metamorph. lib. vi. p. 135.

mount to heaven, with his flaming torch. Sometimes ſhe is drawn kneeling, with her hands tied behind her; a certain mark of the abject ſlavery into which a ſoul is brought by the power of the paſſions. At other times ſhe is to be ſeen bound to a tree, while Cupid is ſeverely beating her with rods. In an engraving publiſhed by Spon, he is even armed with a hammer and chiſſel to bruiſe and torment her tender limbs. Theſe gems and ſculptures ſufficiently mark the parallel ſentiments entertained on this ſubject by the philoſophers of Greece and of India; but in no country ever yet heard of, except the latter, have auſterities been actually put in practice of ſuch a dreadful and ſanguinary complexion, as thoſe voluntarily inflicted upon themſelves by the penitents of the latter country.

CHAPTER V.

The Metempsychosis, or Wandering of the Soul, through various Spheres *and various* Bodies, *being believed in a far more extensive Degree in India than in ancient Greece, and, in Fact, making an important Part of the religious Code of the Brahmins, has been productive of Doctrines and Practices far more romantic and extravagant in the former than in the latter Country. — A Variety of Instances adduced in Proof of the above Assertion, as well in Regard to the supposed retrospective Power of that Soul to penetrate the Obscurity of past Ages and Events, as the singular Penances which the ancient* GYMNOSOPHIST *and modern* YOGEE *alike inflicted upon themselves, to renovate their fallen State. — An extended Parallel drawn between those two Characters, both from ancient and modern Sources of authentic Information. — The Self-Sacrifice of* CALANUS *and* ZARMANOCHAGAS, *by Fire, in the Times of Alexander and Augustus, contrasted with recent Instances of that Species of*

of public Suicide.—The real Origin of that dreadful Custom of the Indians investigated and explained.

THE Indian philosophers seem, at all times, to have carried their notions concerning the Metempsychosis to a point of greater extravagance than the Pythagoreans and Platonists; and those more extravagant notions impelled them to adopt severer modes of expiation and penance. The philosophers of Greece, at least those who alone truly merited that appellation, believed and felt that the soul was a degraded and fallen spirit, that the body was its terrestrial prison, that life was a state of expiation and discipline, and they considered death only as a passage to a more perfect and happy state, in which they should be reunited to the eternal source whence that soul emaned, the supreme BEATITUDE. It was this belief that supported the soul of SOCRATES in his dying moments, and disarmed of its terrors the poisoned bowl. It was the propagation of this sublime doctrine, which shines forth with such lustre in the Phædo of Plato, that procured to that philosopher the envied title of DIVINE. The Brahmins conceiving, as was before-observed, that,

that, by the power of abſtracted meditation and abſorption, they are able to penetrate into paſt as well as future ſcenes, have indulged on this ſubject ſpeculations far more bold and extenſive, and formed the reſult of thoſe ſpeculations into a regular ſyſtem of religious belief and action. By this power, the contemplatiſt can trace his ſpiritual genealogy through ſucceſſive ſpheres and animals for a hundred generations, and knows what particular puniſhment in one ſtate unalterably attends the perpetration of crimes in another. Endued with this imaginary power, and incited by the wild phrenzy of ſuperſtition, he is for ever rolling back his eye upon the paſt periods of exiſtence, and, for every calamity endured in the preſent ſtate, he can inſtantly find a cauſe in the vices and follies of the ſtate preceding. Diſeaſe imbibed with the breath of life is thus accounted for, and rendered tolerable; ſince men, blind and lame from the womb, are only ſuffering penance for former crimes, and therefore ſuſtain their hard fate with cheerfulneſs and reſignation. "Phyſicians (ſays the Hindoo Saſtra) aſſert that ſickneſs originates in the animal conſtitution, but thoſe ſkilled in the myſtery of the Metempſychoſis maintain that it is a puniſhment for

crimes committed in a former ftate."* It cannot fail of gratifying curiofity, however it may fometimes provoke laughter, to fpecify a few of thofe caufes for terreftrial fuffering enumerated in the fame Saftra.

Thus, in regard to men, epilepfy is a punifhment for one who has, in a previous exiftence, poifoned another. Blindnefs and madnefs are punifhments, the firft for murdering your parents, the laft for having been difobedient and negligent of them; dumbnefs for having killed a fifter; the ftone for having committed inceft; fevers, afthmas, indigeftion, &c. &c. have alfo their whimfical caufes affigned them, and the expiations are, in fome inftances, as whimfical as in others they are extremely fevere; but, in general, are too tedious to be here enumerated. They confift, for the moft part, of vaft fums, given away in charity *to the Brahmins*, or in the long and dreadful faft of the Chanderayan. In refpect to women, upon whom thefe uncivil Brahmins, impotent through age or aufterities, feem to be uncommonly fevere, it is afferted,† that a woman who furvives her hufband, which in India is a difgrace, was falfe to her hufband

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. ii. p. 169.

† Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 172.

husband in the preceding ftate. The expiation: fhe muft pafs all her life in aufterities, or put an end to her exiftence by burying herfelf in fnow. — The woman, whofe child dies, has, in a former ftate, expofed her child, which died in confequence of that expofure. The expiation: a cow of gold, with hoofs of filver, beftowed in charity. — A woman, who has only daughters, was inflamed with pride in her former exiftence, and was difrefpectful to her hufband. The expiation: let her feed *fifty Brahmins.* — I fhall not torture the reader's patience with any more of thefe abfurd details. Abfurd, however, as they appear to us, they form the creed of the pious in India, who, confidering the Brahmins as a portion of the Deity, are not in the leaft fhocked by this barefaced monopoly of facred donations by that avaricious order. So barefaced indeed is it, that, in a following page, it is afferted, that whofoever fhall give to the Brahmins fufficient ground for a houfe to ftand upon, fhall enjoy ten kulehs in paradife before he returns again to the earth; but, if he fhould be fo generous as to beftow upon them a thoufand head of cattle, their grand reward will be ten thoufand years of blifs in paradife before he

revifits earth.* How different is the felfifh maxim here inculcated from the following very enlarged and liberal fentiment in the Geeta. The difparity may, in fome meafure, be accounted for, by confidering that it is the Deity, not the prieft, that fpeaks. "They, who ferve even *other gods* with a firm belief, in doing fo, involuntarily worfhip *me*, I am he who partaketh of all worfhip, and I am their reward."†

We muft now complete the dreadful picture of Indian penance which we are exhibiting, by more particularly introducing the reader to the Gymnofophift, or Yogee.

The Yogees, or ancient Gymnofophifts, are, as their name, derived from *γυμνος*, *nudus*, and *σοφος*, *fapiens*, implies, abfolutely divefted of all covering, as well to fhew how contemptible, in their opinion, the body is in comparifon of the divine gueft that inhabits it, as for convenience; fince Dindamis, one of them, in his fpeech to Alexander, acutely enough obferved, "*that* is the moft fuitable habitation for a philofopher which is the leaft encumbered with furniture." Of all the ancient writers on this fubject, Strabo perhaps is moft to be depended upon; fince he profeffes to have

* Ayeen Akbery, vol. iii. p. 135. † Geeta, p. 81.

have acquired his information, relative to India, from thoſe who had been ambaſſadors at Palibothra, the preſent Patna. Strabo gives us two remarkable inſtances of the voluntary ſeverities which two of theſe gymnoſophiſts inflicted upon themſelves: the firſt, far advanced in years, hoped to obtain heaven by lying conſtantly extended upon the hard ground without any covering, expoſed to all the fervours of a tropical ſun, and without any ſhelter from the drenching rains, which, at particular ſeaſons, deſcended in torrents.* The ſecond, who was more in the vigour of life, laboured to obtain the ſame immortal boon by ſtanding on one leg for a whole day, and bearing aloft, at the ſame time, with both his erected arms an immenſe piece of wood.† Pliny acquaints us, that ſome gymnoſophiſts would fix their eager and ſtedfaſt eyes upon the ſun from the time of his riſing till his ſetting; while others, at the ſame time, would ſtand on one foot, alternately varying the foot on which they ſtood, for a whole day, in the midſt of burning ſands, without ſhrinking or complaining. The original in Pliny is as follows: "*Philoſophos eorum, quos gymnoſophiſtas vocant, ab exortu ad occaſum perſtare con-*

* Strabo, lib. xv. p. 491. † Ibid.

tuentes ſolem IMMOBILIBUS OCULIS, *ferventibus arenis toto die alternis pedibus conſiſtere.*"* He might have added the epithet of *nudis* to *pedibus*; for, the gymnoſophiſts, as the name implies, entirely reject every ſort of covering for the body, even that which decency requires.

Cicero, ſpeaking of the gymnoſophiſts, warmly commends their invincible patience and undaunted fortitude. " Theſe men," ſays that eloquent writer, " with equal firmneſs endure the ſeverity of the ſnows of Caucaſus while they live, as they brave, when life verges on expiration, the fire that terminates their life of torture;"† alluding to the ſuicidal flames in which Calanus and Zarmanochagas periſhed. This particular ſubject of their ſometimes conſuming themſelves, while yet living, on the funeral pile, and the general cuſtom in India of burning their dead, I ſhall make the laſt article of conſideration in this extenſive and final chapter of the Indian Theology.

Arrian, ſpeaking of this ſame race, obſerves: Theſe people live naked. In winter they enjoy the benefit of the ſun's rays in the open air; and, in the ſummer, when the heat

* Plin. Nat. Hiſt. lib. vii. cap. 2.

† Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. v.

heat becomes exceffive, they pafs their time in moift and marfhy places under large trees; which, according to Nearchus, cover a circumference of five acres, and extend their branches fo far, that ten thoufand men may eafily find fhelter under them.*

Porphyry enters into the fubject more extenfively, and makes a juft difcrimination between the *Brachmans* and *Gymnofophifts*, or *Samaneans*, as he calls them. He fixes very accurately the place of refidence of the former, fome on the mountains, by which he probably meant the old college at Naugracut, and fome on the Ganges, at Cafi and Patna. Thofe on the mountains, he fays, feed on fruits and cows' milk, congealed with herbs (probably curds, or ghee); thofe on the Ganges eat the abundant vegetables and wild barley that grow in its neighbourhood. In refpect to the *Samaneans*, or *Sarmans*, as Clemens calls them, he characterifes them very juftly as men voluntarily depriving themfelves of all worldly wealth and advantages, fhaving their heads and beards, and refolutely quitting their wives and children for the defert. He defcribes them as living there upon herbs and water alone, as

 reluctantly

* Arrian, lib. vii. p. 275, edit. Gronovii, and confult the engraving here annexed.

reluctantly bearing the load of life, and, inflamed with the hope of tranſmigrating into a better ſtate, as impatiently panting for the hour of their departure.*

There is no neceſſity to cite farther the ſentiments of the ancients on the ſubject of theſe rigid devotioniſts. Let us turn to the more authentic accounts of the moderns, and exemplify the train of general obſervations preceding by particular inſtances of individuals, who have been ſeen, by modern travellers, in the act of ſuffering the almoſt-incredible ſeverities alluded to above. One of them, whoſe veracity may be depended upon, has illuſtrated the ſubject with a very curious print of YOGEES in various attitudes of penance; and, ſince that print repreſents ſo ſtrikingly both thoſe devotees and the great banian-tree of India, of which ſo ample an account was inſerted in a preceding volume, I have had it engraved, by a very correct artiſt, for the inſpection of thoſe, whoſe curioſity may have been excited by the detail of their ſufferings in this volume. It would have been inconſiſtent with propriety, though not with the delicacy I could wiſh to have been preſerved,

* Porphyry de Abſtinentia, lib. iv. p. 167, edit. Cantab. 1655.

preferved, to have given any covering to deluded wretches, whofe glory it is to have caft off every veftment, and with it the very fenfe of fhame: the figures, I truft, are upon too fmall a fcale to excite any difguft in the reader. It was to avoid giving offence that I forbore to have engraved, as it merited, upon a larger plate, that mighty tree, under whofe fhade they dwelt, and which may be truly called the monarch of the vegetable world.*

One of the Mohammedan travellers, who vifited India in the ninth century, informs us, that "there are in the Indies certain men who profefs to live in the woods and mountains, and to defpife whatfoever is confidered valuable by the reft of mankind. They go all their life-time ftark naked, and fuffer the hair of their head and beard to grow till it nearly covers their whole body. They religioufly forbear to pare their nails, fo that they become pointed and fharp as fwords; and around the neck of each is fufpended an earthen porringer, intended to contain the rice and other food which charity may fupply. They, for the moft part, ftand motionlefs as ftatues, with their faces always turned to the fun. I formerly faw one in the pofture here defcribed,

and,

* Confult the defcription of it, vol. iii. p. 492.

and, returning to India about ſixteen years afterwards, I found him in the very ſame attitude, and was aſtoniſhed he had not loſt his eye-ſight by the intenſe heat of the ſun."*

Baldæus, an excellent and authentic writer, who reſided many years in India, ſays, that, beſides their uſual purifications, ſome of the Yogees carry huge iron collars about their necks, others travel about conſtantly encumbered with heavy fetters and chains of the ſame metal, while ſharp nails, with their points terminating inwards, line their wooden ſlippers or ſandals. Others, he adds, have cauſed themſelves to be bound immoveably with ſtrong ropes or chains to a tree, and in that poſture expired, after lingering for many months in the greateſt tortures; and that, in 1657, he himſelf ſaw a Yogee at Columbo, whoſe arms were grown together over his head from being kept long erect in that poſture.†

It is exceedingly remarkable, that theſe men ſhould poſſeſs ſuch exalted notions of the purity of the Deity, and yet entertain ſuch con-

* Renaudot's ancient Accounts of India and China, p. 32, edit. London, 1733.

† Baldæus, in Churchill's Voyages, vol. iii. p. 896, firſt edition.

contemptuous and degrading ideas of the works created by him. According to them, all nature is contaminated, and the earth itſelf labours under ſome dreadful defilement, a ſentiment, which, in my humble opinion, could only ſpring from certain corrupted traditions relative to God's *curſing the ground, and condemning it to bring forth thorns and thiſtles*, on the fall of man. To ſuch an extreme point of extravagance, however, do they carry their conceptions on this point, that ſome of them, according to Du Halde, impelled by the dread of *terreſtrial pollution*, have embraced the reſolution of never more touching the planet which they were born to cultivate, and cauſe themſelves to be ſuſpended aloft in cages upon the boughs of trees, to which elevation the admiring multitude raiſe the ſcanty proviſion, neceſſary to the ſupport of the ſmall portion of life that animates their emaciated carcaſes.* Another of the ancient Jeſuites, cited in Purchaſe, relates as follows: "Theſe JOGUES, with admirable patience, endured the ſunne's heat; and one among the reſt encloſed the trunk of his body in an iron cage, while his head and feet alone were at liberty. In this ſituation he could neither ſit nor lie down at

* See Du Halde's Hiſt. of China, vol. i. p. 50.

at any time, and round the cage were suspended a hundred lamps, which four other JOGUES, his companions, lighted at certain times. Thus walked he, in this his perpetual prison, *as a light unto the world*, in his vain-glorious opinion."*

These sentiments and these practices are, I own, apparently very contradictory to some others in vogue among the Indians, such as burying themselves in pits hollowed in the ground, with only a small hole left open at the top to breathe through, of which an example or two will be given hereafter; and the custom of purifying themselves by passing through a natural or artificial cavern, where the spiritual pilgrims entered in at the south gate, and made their exit at the northern one, as was anciently the custom in the Mythriac mysteries, for astronomical reasons already assigned, and according to the remarkable instance which we have given of the famous Angria in modern times.† *Apparently contradictory*, however, as they are, they, in fact, originate in the same prejudices, and are referable to

* See Purchase's Pilgrimage, p. 636, folio edit. 1617. — Master Purchase ludicrously enough calls these JOGUES *sad rogues;* and to the SANIASSIS he gives the facetious appellation of *holy asses*.

† See the appendix to the preface, vol. i.

to the ſame creed. The penitents being firſt inhumed, and afterwards emerging from the pit, as well as their paſſage through the dreary cavern, were only emblems of terreſtrial trials and ſtruggles undergone and happily ſurmounted by the ſoul in its progreſs to perfection and glory through the various inferior ſpheres of purgation and purification; for, it ſhould never be forgotten, that to thoſe ſpheres, in the Hindoo aſtronomical theology, different degrees of purity and ſanctity are attributed, or rather, to ſpeak more properly, different degrees of impurity and guilt. Conſonant to this idea, on one of their feſtivals that fall in June, and which, according to Mr. Holwell, is called the UMBOOBISSEE, (Ambuvachi is the Sanſcreet word,) the earth itſelf, conformable to the Egyptian and Greek mythology, being converted into a prolific female, *is left to her purgations* from the ſeventh day to the tenth of that month, both days incluſive, during which period, neither plough, nor ſpade, nor any other agricultural inſtrument, is permitted to moleſt her.* I ought alſo before to have mentioned this author's account of the Sanniaſs Pooja, or Hindoo Lent, which laſts from the firſt to the thirtieth of March, on

* Holwell's Gentoo Faſts and Feſtivals, part ii. p. 125.

on which laſt day, the penance of the CHEREC, or *wheel*, is ſubmitted to by the Yogee; a penance not the leaſt painful and eccentric of thoſe endured in India, and which is thus deſcribed by Captain Hamilton, who has given an engraving of the ſwing-machine on which the penance is performed. "On the coaſt of Canara," ſays our humorous captain, whom the ſevere pains of the penitents do not ſeem very ſenſibly to have touched, "ſeveral thouſands of people aſſemble in the middle of a grove around a ſhapeleſs black ſtone of 300 or 400 weight, (it is the phallus of Seeva, and the performers are rigid Saivites,) beſmeared with red lead mixed with oil, to ſerve for a mouth, eyes, and ears, with a vaſe of incenſe burning before it, and a young virgin of ten years old" (an Indian veſtal, we muſt ſuppoſe; for, few are virgins in that warm climate after that age) "to attend and cheriſh the flame. Some prieſts all naked, except a cloth of decency, run and dance round the ſtone and fire for half an hour like madmen, making ſtrange diſtortions in their faces, and now and then bellowing like calves. This was the firſt ſcene. Thoſe prieſts had previouſly erected a ſcaffold, about 15 feet long and as many broad,

broad, in the middle of which was elevated a piece of wood about 20 feet high. In the upper end of this beam was cut a notch, on which refted a lever about 40 feet long, with two crofs-beams at the end, each four feet in length, with a rope faftened to the ends, on which the actors were to hang, and perform their parts. The penitents were four in number; and, prefenting themfelves to the priefts, the latter took two tenter-hooks, exactly fuch as the butchers in Britain ufe to hang their meat on, and fix thofe hooks in the mufcles of the backs of each. The hooks being faftened to the ropes at each end of the crofs-beams, the penitents were then drawn up into the air. They were kept hanging by their backs in this manner at the diftance of ten yards from the ground, while hundreds of other devotees dragged the fcaffold, which went upon wheels, above a mile over ploughed ground; the fufpended penitents all the while fwinging round in a circle, whence the name of CHEREC, a *circle* or *wheel.* They were then let down in a bleeding condition, but both exulting themfelves, and amidft the exulting acclamations of the fpectators."* M. Sonnerat, who alfo

* Hamilton's Voyage to the Eaft Indies, vol. i. p. 274. Oct. Lond. edit. 1745.

alſo ſaw this dreadful ceremony performed on the Coromandel coaſt, ſays they are generally armed with a ſword and a ſhield, which they brandiſh with the furious motions of a man who is fighting, and, to ſhew their heroiſm, often give themſelves dreadful wounds. They muſt appear cheerful whatever pain they may feel; for, if tears eſcape them, they are driven from their caſt, a puniſhment more terrible than death itſelf.*

Theſe authentic accounts of the indifference which the devout Indians feel at the ſevereſt inflictions of corporeal pain may ſtrike Europeans with aſtoniſhment, but they will not thoſe who have reſided in India, and ſeen the Yogees aſſembled under their ſacred trees in acts of penance. For, what will not frantic ſuperſtition perform? In India, even the women themſelves reject the natural ſoftneſs and timidity of their ſex, with determined reſolution brave the dreadful ordeal of boiling oil, walk over plates of burning iron, and mount with ſerenity the funeral pile: while the men, by nature more daring and intrepid, perform, ſuch acts as can ſcarcely be admitted for true, even by credulity itſelf. An inſtance or two of this more deſperate kind now lies before me, in

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 149.

in Renaudot's Arabian Travellers, which for refolution and horror cannot poffibly be paralleled among any nation of the earth, except among the fanguinary favages, who fing the DEATH SONG on the plains of America. A certain perfon, determined like Calanus to facrifice himfelf alive in the flames, when he approached the altar, drew out his fabre, and, with his right hand, gave himfelf a wide and dreadful gafh that reached from the breaft far down in the abdomen, and laid bare his entrails to the view of the fpectators. He then, with his left, tore out a lobe of the liver, which he cut off with the fame fabre, and gave it to one of his brothers who ftood by, converfing all the time with the utmoft indifference, and with apparent infenfibility to the torments that racked him. He then, with undaunted countenance, leapt into the flames, and, without any vifible motion, was burnt to cinders.*

In the early periods, when thefe travellers vifited India, it was the cuftom of the Yogees of the mountains to dare to acts of fingular aufterity thofe who lived in the plains. Among others, there once came down a Yogee who called upon the penitents of the plain ei-

* Ancient Relations, p. 80.

ther to follow the example he was about to ſet them, or elſe to own their zeal and fortitude inferior. He ſat himſelf down in a plantation of canes which grew in the neighbourhood. Theſe canes, ſay our travellers, reſemble our ſugar-canes, are ſupple, and bend like them, have a large ſtem, and often grow to a vaſt height. When bowed down by force, they obey the preſſure without breaking, but, as ſoon as the preſſure is removed, they violently fly back, and regain their firſt rectitude. One of the loftieſt and largeſt of theſe canes he ordered to be bent down to his height, and faſtened his long and buſhy hair ſtrongly to the end of it; then taking his ſabre, which, from its keenneſs, ſparkled like fire, he ſevered it from his body, and it mounted into the air. None of the ſpectators had reſolution to follow his example, and the mountaineers triumphed over their brethren of the valley. The high reputation which the book, from which theſe facts are almoſt *verbatim* extracted, enjoys, will, I truſt, reſcue the relation either from contempt or diſcredit.*

Dr. Fryer, an eminent phyſician and a fellow of the Royal Society, who was at Surat about the ſame time with Baldæus, has alſo given

* Ancient Relations, p. 82.

given a very ample and particular account of Indian penitents, whom he visited under the great banian-tree in its neighbourhood. One of these penitents he remarked, whose nails, by neglect, were grown as long as a man's finger, having absolutely pierced into the flesh; and another, whose bushy, plaited, sun-burnt, hair trailed upon the ground, being above four yards in length. Some he saw with their arms so dislocated, that, as the Doctor expresses himself, "the διαρθρωσις of the joints was inverted, and the head of the bone lay in the pit or valley of the arm. In that situation they must necessarily be defrauded of their nourishment, and hang down useless appendages to the body; so that, unless relieved by charitable attendants, which are numerous at these holy retreats, the sufferers must perish; being totally unable to help themselves." Others, he observed, who kept their eyes immutably fixed on heaven, like Pliny's gymnosophists, their heads hanging over their shoulders, and incapable of being moved from that posture from the stiffness contracted, during a long uninterrupted rest, by the tendons of the muscles and the ligaments of the neck, so that no aliment, not liquid, can possibly pass, and even that is swallowed with much diffi-

 culty.

culty. Others, by continued abſtinence, were ſo emaciated, that they appeared like walking ſkeletons. All were bedaubed with aſhes, and all ſlept upon the bare ground.

He gives two other remarkable inſtances of penitentiary ſuffering, the former of which will corroborate what was before inſerted concerning the penance between four fires under a meridian ſun, and which muſt have appeared, to one who has not been an eye-witneſs of theſe horrible exhibitions, abſolutely incredible. A Yogee had reſolved, ſays our traveller, for forty days to endure the purgatory of five fires, the blazing ſun above his head making the fifth. The ſolemn act was to take place during a public feſtivity, and before an innumerable crowd of ſpectators. Early in the morning, the penitent was ſeated on a quadrangular ſtage, with three aſcents to it. He now fell proſtrate, and continued fervent at his devotions till the ſun began to have conſiderable power. He then roſe, and aſſumed the poſition of the Yogee at No. 9, in the print annexed, looking ſtedfaſtly at the ſun, and ſtanding on one of his legs, while the other was kept in a bent poſture drawn up under him. In the interim, ſays our traveller, four fires being kindled (either of them large enough

enough to roaſt an ox) at each corner of the ſtage, the penitent, counting over his beads, and occaſionally uſing his pot of incenſe, like Scævola, with his own hands increaſed the flames; adding to them combuſtible matter by way of incenſe; he then bowed himſelf down in the centre of the four fires, with his eye ſtill fixed upon the ſun, and ſtood upon his head, his feet being bolt upright in the air for three hours; after which he ſeated himſelf croſs-legged, and remained ſo all the reſt of the day, roaſting between thoſe fires, and bathed in the profuſe exudation of his own greaſe.*

Three others of theſe devotees, according to Fryer, had made a vow not to lie down for ſixteen years, but to remain ſtanding on their feet during that time. The elder of them had completed the full period of his painful diſcipline; of the two others, the firſt had paſſed *five*, the ſecond *three*, years in that poſition. The legs of all three were ſwollen in a dreadful manner, and deeply ulcerated; but, being unable to ſupport the weight of their bodies, they leaned upon pillows ſuſpended on a ſtring, which hung from one of the branches of the banian-tree, after the

* Fryer's Travels, p. 102, edit. fol. 1698.

manner of the figure, marked No. 7, in the plate. He, who had completed his penance, was afterwards entombed in the ſame ſtanding poſition for nine days without taking any ſuſtenance, and, to prove that he actually continued in his earthy bed during all the nine days, he cauſed, ſays our author, " a bank of earth to be thrown up before the mouth of his cave, on which was ſown a certain grain, which *ears* exactly in nine days, and which in fact did *ear* before his removal thence." Fryer ſaw the ſqualid figure of this penitent immediately after his reſurrection from this ſubterraneous priſon.*

M. Sonnerat was the eye-witneſs of many of theſe extravagant penances on the coaſt of Coromandel. The following particulars are the reſult of his obſervation and inquiries. After having deſcribed ſome of their penances of inferior note, he proceeds to remark: " The Indians have, beſide theſe, other more rigid penitents, whom fanaticiſm induces to quit friends, relatives, poſſeſſions, every thing, in order to lead a miſerable life. The majority are of the ſect of Seeva. The only goods they can poſſeſs are a lingam, to which they continually offer their adorations, and a tiger's ſkin on which

* Fryer's Travels, p. 103.

which they ſleep. They exerciſe on their bodies all that a fanatic fury can convey to their imagination: ſome tear their fleſh with the ſtrokes of a whip, or faſten themſelves to the foot of a tree by a chain, which death only can break: — others make a vow to remain all their lives in an uneaſy poſture, ſuch as keeping the hands ſhut, while their nails, which they never cut, in the courſe of time pierce through them. Some are ſeen who have their hands always croſſed on their breaſts, or lifted above their heads in ſuch a manner that they can no more bend them. Theſe unfortunate people can neither eat or drink without the aſſiſtance of ſome diſciples who follow them; and it may be eaſily judged what they muſt ſuffer during ſeveral years, to reduce their arms to this ſtate of inaction. Many bury themſelves, and breathe only through a little hole; and it is wonderful, conſidering the time they remain under-ground, that they are not ſuffocated. Others, who are leſs enthuſiaſts, are contented with burying themſelves only up to the neck. Some are found who have made a vow always to ſtand upright, without ever lying down; they ſleep leaning againſt a wall or a tree; and, to deprive themſelves of all means of ſleeping comfortably, they put

their necks into certain machines that resem-ble a kind of grate, which, when once they have rivetted on, can no more be taken off. Others ſtand whole hours upon one foot, with their eyes fixed on the ſun, contemplating that planet with the moſt earneſt application of mind. Others, again, obſerve the ſame poſition with one foot in the air, the other reſting only on tiptoe, and with both arms elevated; they are placed in the midſt of four vaſes full of fire, and keep their eyes intenſe-ly fixed on the ſolar orb.

" There are alſo others who appear in pub-lic quite naked, and that to ſhew that they are no longer ſuſceptible of any paſſion, and are re-entered into a ſtate of innocence ſince they have given their bodies to the Divinity. The people, perſuaded of their virtue, eſteem them as ſaints, and imagine they can obtain of God whatever they aſk: they alſo believe that they perform a work of piety in haſtening to carry them victuals, to put in the mouths of thoſe who are prohibited the uſe of their hands, and to cleanſe them. The number of theſe more rigid penitents is much leſſened ſince the Indians have been oppreſſed and reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery. The only perſon of this kind I ever ſaw pierced his cheeks with an iron,

which

which went through his tongue, and was rivetted on the other ſide of the cheek with another piece of iron, which formed a circle underneath the chin.

" The characteriſtic of theſe penitents is, great pride, ſelf-love, and a belief that they are ſaints. They avoid being touched by people of a low caſt, and Europeans, from a fear of being defiled; they will not even let them touch their goods, but fly at their approach. They have a ſovereign contempt for all who are not in their ſtate, and eſteem them as profane: there is alſo nothing belonging to them but what is thought to contain ſome myſtery, and that is not alſo eſteemed worthy of great veneration.

" The Indian hiſtory has preſerved the memory of a great many of theſe penitents, celebrated in ancient times, and whom the penitents of this day glory in imitating."*

The Chaldeans, it has been obſerved, had *a feaſt of fire*. The Indians, likewiſe, have a feaſt of fire, during which, the zealous devotees among them walk on that element. It was inſtituted in honour of DARMA-RAJA, and ſhould be more properly called a *faſt* than a *feaſt*; for, thoſe devotees are to refrain from food

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 176.

food during all the eighteen days which it lafts, forbear all connection with women, fleep on the bare ground, and walk on a brifk fire. The laft, or eighteenth, day, they affemble to the found of inftruments, their heads crowned with flowers, and their bodies befmeared with faffron, and follow the image of Darma-raja and Drobede his wife, which are carried in proceffion three times round a fire, kindled to the honour of thofe deities. — After this, the devotees actually pafs through the fire, which, M. Sonnerat afferts, is extended to about forty feet in length, walking through the flames flowly or quickly according to their zeal, and often, like the fuperftitious votaries of Moloch, carrying their children in their arms.*

On thofe moft holy feftivals, on which their greater gods are carried about on vaft machines, drawn by feveral thoufand devotees, our author has feen fathers and mothers of families, bearing alfo their children in their arms, throw themfelves headlong under the broad and ponderous wheels, in hopes of gaining immediate admiffion into heaven, by fo exalted a fate as that of being crufhed to death by the chariot of the god. By thefe fuicidal executions, he informs us, the proceffion

* Sonnerat's Voyages, p. 153.

ſion is never impeded, nor the people ſhocked. The machine is drawn over the bodies of theſe unfortunate wretches without emotion, and its weight, in paſſing, pounds them unlamented to atoms.*

Mr. Haſtings, in his prefatory letter to the Geeta, mentions his having ſeen one of theſe abſtracted Yogees at his devotions, and adds ſome judicious obſervations on the abſorption of the Brahmins, which the reader will not be diſpleaſed to ſee. " It is to be obſerved, (ſays Mr. Haſtings,) in illuſtration of what I have premiſed, that the Brahmins are enjoined to perform a kind of ſpiritual diſcipline, not, I believe, unknown to ſome of the religious orders of Chriſtians in the Romiſh church. This conſiſts in devoting a certain period of time to the contemplation of the Deity, his attributes, and the moral duties of life. It is required of thoſe who practiſe this exerciſe, not only that they diveſt their minds of all ſenſual deſire, but that their attention be abſtracted from every external object, and abſorbed, with every ſenſe, in the preſcribed ſubject of their meditation. I myſelf was once a witneſs of a man, employed in this ſpecies of devotion, at the principal temple of Benares.

* Sonnerat's Voyages, vol. i. p. 121.

Benares. His right hand and arm were enclosed in a looſe ſleeve or bag of red cloth, within which he paſſed the beads of his roſary, one after another, through his fingers, repeating, with the touch of each, as I was informed, one of the names of God; while his mind laboured to catch and dwell on the idea of the quality which appertained to it, and ſhewed the violence of its exertion to attain this purpoſe by the convulſive movements of all his features, his eyes being at the ſame time cloſed, doubtleſs to aſſiſt the abſtraction. The importance of this duty cannot be better illuſtrated, nor ſtronger marked, than by the laſt ſentence with which Creeſhna cloſes his inſtruction to Arjoon, and which is properly the concluſion of the Geeta: "Hath what I have been ſpeaking, O Arjoon, been heard *with thy mind fixed to one point?* Is the *diſtraction* of thought, which aroſe from thy ignorance, removed?"

Mr. Crauford, in his Sketches of Indian Mythology, a book which merits a more important title than the modeſty of the author has permitted him to beſtow upon it, mentions an inſtance of an Indian penitent, who not long ago finiſhed meaſuring the diſtance between Benares and Jaggernaut with his body,

dy, by alternately ſtretching himſelf upon the ground, and riſing: which, he obſerves, if faithfully executed, muſt have taken up ſome years to have accompliſhed. He adds another of an aged father of a numerous offspring, who, like Calanus, recently devoted himſelf to the flames. He committed the fatal act in the hope of appeaſing the wrath of a divinity, who, as he imagined, had for ſome time paſt afflicted his family and neighbours with a mortal epidemical diſeaſe;* a proof that the notion of the efficacy of a *human ſacrifice* is not at this day wholly extinct in India.

In fact, the whole ſeries of dreadful penances above-deſcribed, in reading which the mind of the reader muſt have been filled with alternate indignation and horror, is nothing more than the relics of a vaſt ſyſtem of ſanguinary ſuperſtition, which, from whatever quarter derived, is equally inſulting to the Deity and deſtructive to his creatures. True religion, the religion which Chriſtianity aims to eſtabliſh in the world, impreſſes the mind with ſentiments widely different from theſe; exalted benevolence, tender ſympathy, and generous compaſſion: it inculcates not an arrogant and preſumptuous ſpirit to *dare*, but a

* Sketches, vol. i. p. 243.

a humble and reſigned ſpirit to *endure*, the evils allotted to the preſent ſtate; a ſtate, which, though a ſtate of probation, has its SOCIAL PLEASURES as well as its DISTRACTING CARES, and in which, while we are taught to bear the latter with becoming fortitude, we are permitted to enjoy the former with hearts overflowing with beneficent affections to our fellow-creatures and fervent gratitude to the Almighty Donor.

ON THE INDIAN CUSTOM OF BURNING THEMSELVES, AND THE MOTIVES WHICH LED TO THAT CUSTOM.

Having accompanied the Hindoo penitent, whether Saniaſſi or Yogee, thus far through a life of inceſſant miſery and torture, but miſery and torture ſcarcely felt, let us attend him to the fatal bourn whence no traveller returns; let us mark the cloſing ſcene, and behold the curtain eternally drawn over human ſuffering and terreſtrial probation. By this I do not mean his diſſolution, when he falls a victim to the languor and imbecility of age, when he periſhes by the violence of diſeaſe, or ſinks a gradual

gradual martyr to his aggravated torments : — no ; it is my intention to depict a more impressive and awful picture : when, having gone through the prescribed penances of the four degrees, the Indian Brahmin determines to ascend the flaming altar of sacrifice ; and, by a solemn and public act, devotes himself to the Deity. It is this resolute dereliction of life to which Cicero, cited in a former page, alludes, when he praises the fortitude of the Indians amidst consuming fire ; and, though only an account of two instances of this desperate kind of self-destruction have descended down to us from classical antiquity, we know, not only that it is permitted in their sacred books, but that the dreadful rite has been actually and frequently undergone in India. To gain, however, immediate possession of paradise by this rite is the splendid privilege of the Saniassi and the obedient wife alone. For what reason so brilliant a reward is promised to nuptial constancy, in India, falls not within the scope of my immediate inquiry ; nor the fact itself, of women burning themselves with their deceased husbands, a ceremony which has been often and affectingly described by others : my concern is with the devotee, who, animated by religious zeal, resolves to *burn* ;

to

to examine his motives; and to diſplay the rewards promiſed in the Vedas for an act which he ſtamps with the title of glorious and ſublime.

This cuſtom, ſo immemorially uſed in India, and ſo peculiar to it, had its origin, I am convinced, in the ſyſtem of phyſical theology, which, in the remoteſt periods, ſo univerſally prevailed in the Eaſt. It was only one of the ancient and ſymbolical ceremonies of the Mithratic myſteries realized. It was the laſt ſtage of purification, after which, the ætherial ſpirit, purged of its earthly droſs, immediately aſcended to the ſublime ſource from which it emaned. This, poſſibly, as ſome ſenſible writers have imagined, might have been one reaſon that induced the Egyptians, wanting fuel in ſufficient abundance for the general practice of this rite, to place the bodies of illuſtrious men in pyramidal monuments, which were the ſymbols of fire.

The deep immerſion of the Indians in phyſical inveſtigations is alſo to be traced in this as well as every other part of their theology. The notion, that they are to tranſmigrate through the elements to the Source of Being, induces them rather to wiſh for than retard the hour of diſſolution of the elementary par-

ticles of which the body is compofed. They are impatient, during their confinement in the tabernacle of clay; they mount on the wing of hope; and are eager to confign, not only *afhes to afhes* and *duft to duft*, but to reftore the igneous, the æthereal, and the humid, parts of the mortal frame to the refpective elements. Hence they are, at this day, frequently brought from great diftances to expire on the banks of the Ganges; and are precipitated into death by the quantity of facred mud and water of that river, which is forced into the mouth of the dying perfon, in order to purify him for the new fcene of exiftence into which he is about to enter. Indeed his body is often thrown into the ftream, while as yet a confiderable portion of life remains, and is devoured by alligators. Thus, in fact, we fee the watery, not lefs than the fiery, element is ufed as the medium through which the final tranfmigration is performed. The former method is principally adopted when diffolution takes place near any great and confecrated river: when it happens in fituations very remote from the Ganges, or other facred river, the body is generally burned. This cuftom, however, is not peculiar to the Hindoos, fince many other nations, both an-

cient and modern, have been accuſtomed to burn their dead. The Perſians, however, who of all antiquity held fire in the greateſt veneration, never burned the bodies of perſons defunct: they thought the ſacred flame would be polluted by the injection of a putrid carcaſe; and expoſed their dead, as is done in Guzzurat at the preſent day, on lofty towers, to be eaten by ravenous birds of prey, to be drenched by the ſearching rains, and ſcorched by the blighting winds. But let us return from this digreſſion to the conſideration of the human victim, who offers up himſelf alive on the altar of ſacrifice. In ſearching the claſſical page of antiquity, we find the firſt inſtance of the kind in Arrian, the authentic biographer of the hero of Macedon.

Calanus, who burned himſelf before the whole aſſembled army of Alexander, was one of a body of penitents whom that prince ſaw and converſed with at Taxila, the modern Attock, ſituated on a branch of the Indus, to which it gives its name, and the only one whom he could prevail with to accompany his army back to Perſia.* It is difficult to conceive him to have been a Brahmin, as, in that caſe, he would ſcarcely have left a country, of which

* Arrian, lib. vii. p. 276, edit. Gronovii.

which every ſpot to the Brahmins is conſecrated ground; or have croſſed a frontier river, whoſe very name ſignifies *forbidden*, i. e. to be paſſed by the natives of India. Soon after his arrival in Perſia, being diſordered with a flux, he reſolutely refuſed the proffered aſſiſtance and preſcribed regimen of a foreign race of phyſicians, and ſolicited Alexander, that a funeral pile, for the purpoſe of burning himſelf, might be erected; which Alexander at firſt ſtrenuouſly refuſed; but, finding him inflexible, he at length gave orders for the deathful ſolemnity; when every thing was prepared after a manner becoming the grandeur of ſo great a monarch. The funeral ſcaffold was built of the richeſt woods; cedar, cypreſs, and myrtle: the richeſt gums and aromatics were ſcattered over it; and it was adorned with rich veſtments and veſſels of gold and ſilver. A litter, decorated with garlands after the Indian faſhion, bore to that pile the venerable ſage, who all the way ſang hymns of exultation and triumph in the dialect of his country. Arrived at the pile, he ordered the coſtly furniture of all kinds, and the golden and ſilver vaſes with which it was adorned, to be taken away and diſtributed among his diſciples and attendants; after which he aſ-

cended the pile, and, laying himſelf down upon it, was conſumed. The inſtant that the pile was fired, according to his own expreſs deſire to have his funeral conſidered as a feſtival, the trumpets were ſounded, and the whole army gave a ſhout, as in the moment of victory, being filled with equal admiration and aſtoniſhment at the ſight of a man conſuming to aſhes without any perceptible motion; ſo powerful, ſays Arrian, are the force of habit and the impulſe of education.*

The only other inſtance which we find in claſſical antiquity of an Indian devoting himſelf to the ſacrificial flame, is that of Zarmanochagas, who ranked in the train of a numerous embaſſy, ſent by King Porus, a monarch who reigned, as the letters brought by them ſet forth, over ſix hundred tributary ſovereigns, and therefore muſt have been the ſupreme BALHARA of India, to enter into an alliance with Auguſtus, and cultivate his friendſhip. Numerous, however, as they were when they left India, all but three periſhed through the exceſſive fatigues endured in ſo diſtant a journey, and thoſe three were ſeen by Nicolas Damaſcenus at Antioch. In the very name of this philoſopher we diſcover the

* Arrian, lib. vii. p. 277.

the title of the ancient ſect of the Indian Sarmanes, or Samanæi, mentioned by Porphyry; and his conduct proved him to have been a true gymnoſophiſt, aſpiring after the honours of Brahmanian diſtinction. Zarmanochagas far exceeded Calanus in the value and merit of his ſacrifice, ſince the former aſcended the blazing pile when in the higheſt vigour of health, as well as when enjoying the full gale of proſperity: the latter when under the preſſure of a painful diſeaſe, which he conjectured might deſtroy him. It was at Athens that he ſet the Grecian philoſophers this heroic example of indifference for life and contempt of its moſt valued bleſſings; for, in the preſence of all the learned and renowned of that celebrated city, having newly bathed and being anointed with rich unguents, as it were for a gay wedding rather than a funeral, with reſolute ſtep and ſmiling countenance he mounted the funeral pile, and ſuffered himſelf to be gradually conſumed, while the Stoics of Greece ſtood mute and aſtoniſhed ſpectators of a ſcene equally novel and wonderful.*

Although it muſt be ſuppoſed, that a cuſtom ſo ancient, and entitling the devotee to ſo exalt-

* Suetonius in Vita Auguſti, cap. 21.

ed a reward, is by no means laid aſide in India; yet I can find no particular detailed account of this ceremony in the page of any author, except that of the Mohammedan travellers, often referred to, as having viſited India ſo early as the ninth century. What they have related on this intereſting ſubject is, in ſubſtance, as follows.—When a man has reſolved to commit himſelf to the ſacrificial flame, he firſt goes to the palace and aſks permiſſion to burn himſelf from the reigning ſovereign. Having obtained that permiſſion, on the day appointed for the ſacrifice, he makes a ſolemn and public proceſſion through the ſquares of the city where he reſides to the place where the funeral fire, already kindled, and blazing to a vaſt height, awaits the deſtined victim of his own infatuation. An immenſe concourſe of people ſurround the pile, and feed it with every kind of combuſtibles. In the mean time the cavalcade, conſiſting of the friends and relations of the devotee, proceeds ſlowly on, himſelf marching firſt, diſtinguiſhed by the GARLAND OF FIRE that conſpicuouſly adorns his head. This garland, eſteemed more honourable by the Hindoos than ever was the laurel-wreath worn by a Greek or Roman victor after a campaign of glory, is

formed

formed of ſtraw or dried herbs, upon which, when placed upon his head, they heap burning coals, and invigorate the flame by pouring SANDARAC upon them, which catches fire like Naphtha, and flames as fiercely. Though the blazing garland circles his temples, and the crown of his head be all on fire, too well evidenced to the ſpectators by the offenſive ſtench ariſing from his burnt fleſh, he purſues his way exulting, nor is the ſmalleſt ſymptom of pain ſeen to diſtort the features of his unchanged countenance. Arrived at the fatal pile, he looks round with an intrepid countenance on the flaming ſcaffold and admiring populace; and then, plunging into the flame, is, without a ſtruggle, conſumed to aſhes.*

With this ſolemn and public act, performed in expectation of the glorious immunities promiſed in the Vedas, the journey of the METEMPSYCHOSIS by no means concludes, but rather the real birth is now commenced, and the *gate of immortality* is thrown open. Thus, happily releaſed from its terreſtrial incumbrance, the ſoul, ſublimed, purified, exulting with holy tranſport, immediately mounts in its chariot of flame to the æthereal regions, or manſions prepared for the reception of depart-

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* Ancient Accounts of India and China, p. 80.

ed ſpirits, all varying in their ſplendor and delights, according to the various degrees of ſanctity and excellence attained to during its earthly probation.

By theſe manſions, I muſt ſtill adhere to my firſt-declared opinion, the Brahmin aſtronomical theologians, following the Sabian notions of their anceſtors, mean *the orbs of heaven*; conceiving that their departed anceſtors ſhall blaze forth in thoſe celeſtial abodes with different degrees of ſplendor, even as *one ſtar differeth from another in glory*: but thoſe who have been ſupremely devout, and have been inflexibly rigid in their penances, *ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun for ever*. This fact is, I conceive, inconteſtably proved by innumerable quotations from Sanſcreet authorities, interſperſed throughout the preceding volumes; for, the ſoul that has only been moderately pious is ordained to leave the body at the time that the ſun advances towards the ſouth, on the night of ſome day when the moon is in her ſecond quarter, and will go to the world of the moon. By the ſun's ſouthern tract, they mean the other hemiſphere and its ſtars, which, in relation to them, appears to be beneath, and is, as I before obſerved, the hell, or Naraka, of the Aſiatic mythologiſts, where the

ſerpent

ferpent Sefhanaga with his thoufand heads, every head adorned with a radiant gemmed crown, (a ftar,) holds his gloomy infernal fceptre.* The world of the moon denotes the orbit of that planet.

The foul ardently devout, whofe aufterities, during its earthly pilgrimage, have vanquifhed and even annihilated the action and influence of the corporeal fenfes upon the intellectual faculties, is liberated from the body precifely at the period in which the fun begins to bend its courfe towards the north, and on the morning of fome day when the moon is in her firft quarter. Immediately on its liberation from the prifon of clay, it becomes a free denizen of infinite fpace, traverfing at large the cerulean fields, and floating about in a form of fubtle æther. After a long enjoyment of this celeftial liberty, the reward of virtue long held ftruggling in terreftrial bonds, the foul feeks a permanent abode, and is now borne on a refulgent fun-beam to the paradife of Brahma, the fphere of the good deutahs, who have finifhed their earthly probation in the form of a Brahmin, and is there plunged in

* See the defcription of this Indian Pluto, the king of the NAUGS, or ferpents, extracted from the Afiatic Refearches, in vol. i. p. 241.

in an abyſs of inexpreſſible delights. It remains there for an immenſe period of time, after which it ſprings up with native energy to the Surya-logue, or ſphere of the ſun; whence, perfectly cleanſed from all material droſs, and clothed in robes of pureſt light, it paſſes to the Vaicontha, or paradiſe of Veeſhnu, where it perpetually bathes itſelf in ſtreams of light ten times more brilliant than the meridian ſun, and it finally mingles with, and is abſorbed into, the eſſence of the ſupreme Brahme, who, the veil of mythology being laid aſide, is no other than the INEFFABLE, INFINITE, AND ETERNAL, GOD.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME, AND OF THE INDIAN THEOLOGY.